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ANTHONY'S FORTUNE.

CHAPTER XVII.

It is not surprising that, from incidents such as these, Anthony should go to his work gladly, and hail the house at Kensington as an abode of joy; nor that Bud's presence should hurt him, sometimes, by a mental contrast; nor that her indecorous habit of obtruding upon him at all hours, should seem but the wilfulness that was one of her chief charms. As such it entertained him; and when she was so much engaged upon pleasure as to leave him alone, or when visits to other houses claimed her, the days dragged sensibly. She appeared to his imagination as a happy child. There were others who gave her the same designation, and ruefully admitted subsequently that they were mistaken; for she had already broken, or at least severely damaged, several hearts, had Bud, while retaining her own unimpaired. Despite his indifference to matters in which he could have no share, Anthony was aware of this, both as an abstract certainty and a concrete fact. Mr. Lancelot Memory, whose moroseness of demeanour upon their first encounter had slightly surprised him, appeared to the dulllest intellect before long as a rejected but pertinacious lover,—one of Bud's grovelling victims as distinct from the haughty and rebellious who were dismissed or dismissed themselves irre-

vocably. In this character Memory who had originally made no impression whatever upon the married, subordinate secretary, aroused Anthony's mild amusement, as he might have aroused that of any man not a rival.

Calling almost daily, Mr. Memory saw nothing surprising in that fact himself, and confided in the same obliquity of vision in others. Putting every artifice known to diplomacy into requisition to procure invitations to dances and parties where he gathered the object of his affections would be, he often stood for hours in a draughty corner doing nothing, because her list (a malicious list, with quite human unreliability at times) was already filled up according to her report; and yet he had arrived at an indecently early hour, to the frowning distraction of his hostess, on purpose to defeat such a possibility. Still, to employ an apposite if vulgar metaphor, he hung on. He resented no snubs, not he, nor accepted any dismissal as final; and if he sometimes grew surly under strong provocation, such conduct afforded his mistress vast entertainment, and only elicited a pretence of anger, as testifying to the worshipper's mental disorder. It is true that even his faith might not have held out against an unrelieved outpouring of scorn; but Bud gave him, as she gave many others to their ultimate disillusionment, occasional little tokens of especial

favour; and if Memory attached significance to these, while blindly ignoring them when shown to others, it was only another indication of his lamentable state.

Anthony speedily saw how matters stood, and Memory's suspicious reception of himself lost all the weight it would otherwise have possessed. In the lover's eyes, save in very exceptional circumstances, all men having daily and hourly opportunities of worshipping the idol are insidious foes indeed. They have such advantages for undermining influence that the most fatuously safe cannot but regard them with apprehension; and Memory, who, if he was infinitely fatuous, was in no position which could by any stretch of language be described as safe, felt this so acutely as to be wrought up to a pitch of desperation. In this condition, accentuated by a recent course of severe remoteness on the part of the heartless Bud he took a wild resolution, which, like a wise individual, he put into execution before it had time to cool. The preliminaries presented no insuperable difficulty. To find the Gex family out, and Anthony in, was all he required. The alternative course which had occurred to him of inviting Anthony to dinner and a quiet chat afterwards, he abandoned as unfeasible and calculated to provoke comment,—which, even if he were successful in securing the secretary's acceptance, it might well have done, seeing that they never met without indifference on one side and scowling vigilance on the other.

On a blustery afternoon, therefore, when Anthony was working alone, and pausing at times to watch the bare branches of the trees shivering in the wind and dull clouds straggling across the grey sky, there entered to him Mr. Lancelot Memory, attired even with more care than usual, and

displaying in his inevitable nosegay the choice product of some hot-house sealed against chilling blasts.

"Good-mornin'," remarked the young gentleman, who rigorously subscribed to the tradition that until one has dined, even if by stress of circumstances dinner be postponed for a week, morning still lingers.

"Good-morning," responded Anthony, politely moving forward a chair, and surprised out of his lassitude to receive so unusual a visitor in what he began to regard his sanctum, sacred to himself,—and, of course, Bud.

"Colonel Gex is out?" continued Memory, seating himself bolt upright on the edge of the chair, and accepting it under protest as if it were an obligation from an enemy; here he was at a disadvantage, perceiving that he could not conduct the proceedings with dignity from a seat on the floor, nor stand with comfort during what promised to be a protracted interview.

"So I believe."

"And Miss Gex is out?"

"Yes."

"And Miss Georgiana?"

"I beg your pardon?"

"Georgiana is the young lady's Christian name," said Memory, frowning majestically. "The nickname, or rather pet name, of Miss Bud is reserved for particular intimates."

"Assuredly."

"This being so," resumed Memory, only partially satisfied, and sitting more rigidly erect than ever, "conjoined with the fact that I have called (under the impression of finding them in)—I beg your pardon?"

"Not at all, Mr. Memory; I did not speak."

"Oh, I thought you did," replied Memory, the consciousness that he had degraded himself by his small hypocrisy not tending to composure.

"My mistake; excuse me. As I was sayin', these two facts constitute a favourable opportunity for a few confidential observations on my part which—well, which I hope you'll consider as such, and moreover be so good as to meet in a frank spirit. Otherwise," concluded Memory, deviating from civil supplication to ferocity with a rapidity which is not uncommon at such emotional junctures, "otherwise, you'll be an infernal blackguard."

"I am not in the habit of trading upon confidential communications," replied Anthony soberly.

"Certainly not, sir: permit me to say I should not harbour such an unworthy suspicion for a moment; but having taken what is usually stigmatised as a somewhat unwise course, I am anxious you should not misjudge me."

"Rest assured that you speak to an open mind."

"Thanks," said Memory, apparently not much reassured by the concession. "And as man to man?"

"As man to man," repeated Anthony, rather puzzled, but smiling a little wearily nevertheless. Mr. Memory did not divert him, and he had succumbed a short while before to one of the fits of coughing which attacked him with increasing frequency. His head ached in a heavy way such as follows upon deep potations in the unseasoned vessel, or over-worked brain-tissue.

"I am obliged to you," said Memory, somewhat hampered by having to keep up the dignity of mien he considered requisite, and which reminded him incongruously, between his sentences, of having donned too tight a collar. "We will now approach the essence of my mission."

"If you please."

"Allusion has been made to a

young lady toward whom—hem—to Miss Bud Gex. Well, sir, your situation here—"

"Of an exceptionally kindly treated dependant."

Memory waved his hand, the effect of the gesture being slightly marred by its destroying a portion of the rare blossom in his coat. "Your situation here, I say, permits you much untrammelled intercourse with that young lady, as well as facilities for progress in her interest which cannot be regarded by any one situated as myself without feelings of apprehension. Mr. Smith, you may not have observed it, but my sentiments toward Miss Bud are of the deepest and tenderest nature,—sentiments which nothing can wholly uproot while breath remains in my worthless body,—sentiments which I have had occasion to suspect of being withered already, but sentiments none the less immortal. Now, sir, I am not possessed of an inordinate share of the jaundiced spirit of jealousy, but I reckon up the advantages you are blessed with and to which I have referred, and I also cannot help noting that Miss Bud neglects no chance of holding me up to derision when in your company, and deferring to you."

"Pardon me," interrupted Anthony drily, "I have never known Miss Bud defer to any living soul."

"Then you are blind, that's all I can say," replied Memory, lapsing into recrimination at being thrown out of his flow of language, but recovering himself immediately. "However, we will put that aside, and proceed to the main point. My aspirations being such as I have described, is it not natural that I should wish to know whether I am to perceive a rival in you, and if a rival, whether the rivalry has reached a stage where we are level,

or whether the culmination has arrived, and I must retire? If you have received those tokens which are indisputable, apprise me of the fact, and I will retire from the struggle, without a heart certainly, but still without pillorying myself as an idiot bereft of discrimination. I cannot support suspense longer, on my soul I can't." The distracted gentleman grew so limp and dejected at this point that Anthony almost pitied him. "But," he went on, "I want to know the truth only; don't soften down things and disguise 'em for me. If you twain are to become one, as somebody says somewhere, I shall be content so long as I know she is happy; but refrain, I conjure you, from hypocritical denials which will be refuted by subsequent facts. Speak out, Mr. Smith—tell me how matters stand—I can bear it—and go to the devil without annoying one moment of her sweet innocence by showing my face again."

Memory's earnestness here got the better of him, and he ceased abruptly. He had worked himself up, under the influence of a perfervid imagination, to give to trifles an absurd importance; but at bottom his fears were sincere, and he had chosen the best course, according to his own lights, in going to the fountain-head for their confirmation or removal,—and, after all, the actuating purpose was to relieve Bud from unwelcome attentions. If he did not possess all the profundity he laid claim to, Lancelot Memory's heart was at least in the right place; which, after all, is not to be despised when one lacks the larger proportion of mental subtlety which often seems to accompany a total absence of that organ.

Anthony did not reply at once. Was there ground for what this entranced creature affirmed, he ruminated; had others discovered such

wealth of maddening construction to put upon Bud's childish liberty and his own austere reception of it? No, it could not be; Memory was possessed of one idea which drove all others from his head, and his extravagance explained itself.

"You are labouring under a fatal delusion," he began at length. "Let me dispel it."

"Ah, I know what you would say," interrupted Memory. "Where is my right to interrogate you after this fashion? I have given it; you cannot doubt my probity. If you do," he added, becoming the man again with surprising rapidity, and really looking as if he had slipped the poker down his back during Anthony's interval of abstraction, "I will take measures to demonstrate your error. If you don't, there is no logical grounds for assailin' my attitude. Who is better qualified by devourin' affection, I should like to know? Not all the men she attracts like moths round a candle, and laughs at; not her father, who don't care a rap for anyone but himself; not her sister, who is without the advantage a man possesses in a case like this—though I don't doubt her willingness. It lies between you and me."

"But that is just what it does not do," replied Anthony impatiently. "I was about to explain, when you stopped me, that your fevered intellects have discovered danger where it never existed. Look at me; I am old enough to be your father."

This observation had the reverse of a mollifying effect; in fact Memory swelled with resentment so much as to render the process almost noticeable.

"At any rate," amended Anthony, relapsing into a smile, "almost old enough in years, and more than old enough in knowledge of life."

"Even if I grant that, which I

don't," said Memory, "it is not very comfortin' to reflect on."

"Possibly,—the older in years, the older in guile?"

"I do not say so."

"You thought it?"

"What are you drivin' at, Mr. Smith,—a quarrel?"

"Why should I do so? You have—" Anthony paused for a moment—"yes, you have secured my respect."

"I know what that signifies," said poor Memory, rising and seeming to drop the poker. "You will preserve my confidence, Mr. Smith? It is not much to ask you; perhaps it is a poor conceit, but I don't wish to be lowered in her eyes through the agency of my vanquisher."

"Come here, man!" called Anthony, as his visitor grasped the handle of the door, more irritated than he had been yet, and showing it, though he could not have told why.

Memory stopped, and the half-destroyed flower in his coat might have stood for the emblem of his mental condition. "Well?"

"I am married," said Anthony curtly; "I have been for years. I imagined you were aware of the fact as to which there is no wish, or reason, for concealment."

"Married!" echoed Memory faintly.

"Yes."

Memory reached out his hand. The language of exaltation failed him, and as Anthony took the proffered fingers, politely but undemonstratively, he muttered, "Well, I am damned!"

"That is rather low," said Anthony coldly, shaking him off.

"It is—it is! You are right—but my fears of you transcended those of any other—picture my relief—you cannot!"

"Neither do I desire to do so," replied Anthony. "If my congratulations follow in due course, it should suffice."

"If! Alas!—but I live in hope. Smith, does she know this?"

"Of course, sir," said Anthony sternly. "The imputation is not flattering."

"I apologise, Mr. Smith, unreservedly; it was an outrageous remark, and I am behaving like an ass generally. But I seem a rejuvenated being; henceforth living, breathing, eating, sleeping in a world teeming with hope," and Mr. Memory, so transformed that he entirely neglected the glorious slaughter of g's offered by a fortuitous conjunction, was at much pains to restrain the utter destruction of his dignity by capering with joy.

Anthony made no comment. For the moment he felt that he hated the sight of Memory; he could not bring himself to answer him, and there was the sound of wheels upon the drive. But a minute elapsed between their intermission and the bursting open of the door as if a whirlwind propelled it; thus did Bud always enter a room.

"Mr. Smith," she cried, "we have had such a splendid drive in the keen air! Look at the roses it has brought to my cheeks; are not they beautiful—but—Mr. Memory too! I hope you have not been quarrelling?"

"On the contrary," said Anthony, "we have been exchanging confidences."

"Oh dear, how tedious! I know it is a favourite method with Mr. Memory; he cannot inveigle *me*, but with you he appears more successful."

"He means well, Miss Gex, and I take the will for the deed."

Bud tossed her head; she never quite knew whether to interpret Anthony seriously, and perhaps that

fact roused a formidable factor in the demolition of his peace,—the desire to ascertain his true thoughts. But Memory was there, laboriously endeavouring to attract a share of her capricious attention, and so she ran after Alice who was giving orders to the housekeeper while she removed her furs in the hall preparatory to carrying them up-stairs. The services of their joint maid were disproportionately claimed by Bud.

"I don't think Mr. Smith likes me," she said thoughtfully when they were preparing for dinner that evening, and as if following up a train of unspoken speculation.

"No, Bud? That is a rare phenomenon among your friends."

"But I will make him, Alice."

Alice shook her head reprovingly. It was merely one of the butterfly's idle threats; she had too many willing slaves at call to trouble herself to carry it out.

CHAPTER XVIII.

FLEET STREET has been called the centre of the Universe; and if noise and feverish activity are the qualifications necessary to support pretensions of that description, there is a good deal to be said for the claim. On the same principle, however, there are neighbourhoods, and within a stone's throw, which might be dozing at the outer circumference of created things.

At the upper end of Fleet Street, upon the left hand as one proceeds towards Ludgate Hill, among the multitude of confluent debouching upon the great thoroughfare is one labelled Johnson's Inn. To a casual survey the eminent lexicographer would appear to have harboured no very lofty ideas upon the subject of hostels; for the letters proclaiming the name (almost unreadable from

accumulated smoke and neglect) are painted upon an oblong slip of wood nailed against one of the blank walls of a dingy alley roofed in by the floor of a printing establishment. The roof quivers eternally with the throes of the metal monsters above.

But should the threats of a trembling ceiling be disregarded, and the seeker after Johnson's Inn advance another dozen steps between the blank walls, he will discover the Inn spread out before him, and also that its designation is not to be accepted literally, but as indicating a collection of habitations grouped about a secluded square and destined for the accommodation of members of the legal fraternity.

Beside boasting the advantage of seclusion, the smallness of the Inn imparts an impression of comradeship to the old houses huddling upon one another, as if they were confederates in secrets which can be whispered among a snug family party, but must go no further. The central plot of the square is girdled by iron railings, very rusty, very pointed at the top, and very inflexible. No one has the faintest idea when they were erected, or why. The gate at one angle has hinges and a lock, but the key has been lost ever since the oldest denizen can remember, and there is no ingress to the enclosure by any method short of risking impalement by scaling; yet in that enclosure is neither tree nor shrub nor grass to preserve from intruders, only driftings of casual gravel upon black earth, and select convocations of sparrows. It is an incongruous outrage upon practical utility which has nothing in common with the houses; for though they are old and occasionally rich with carved ceilings or mantel-pieces, there is nothing unpractical about them to judge by the bundles of papers, ink-splashed desks,

scratched high stools, and copying-presses that appear behind every window in succession.

To choose any in particular among these types of the levelling influence of a similar vocation, and declare it hid human emotions, would be a hazardous experiment, for they all appeared uniform departments of a dry-as-dust manufactory guaranteed to grind out involved instruments upon arid subjects (for a consideration nicely computed to trade scale) and nothing else. The sparrows fighting in their cock-pit had more warm blood to all appearance than the whole legal colony together, and the railings might have been as susceptible of soft nothings. Yet within the centre house upon one side of this material area boiled a perfect turmoil of sensibility, rending the bosom of Mr. Lancelot Memory with anguish. He had just arrived at his office,—it being then about eleven o'clock of the forenoon—and as the first disturber of the quiet of Johnson's Inn for at least an hour, the adventurer who had strolled thither would naturally watch his spruce figure to the threshold, if he could not do so, for lack of adequate excuse, into the privacy of his room.

A door, always open during recognised office hours, led from the square. The upper half was of frosted glass, imprinted with the inscription: *MEMORY & MEMORY. Solicitors. Commissioners for Oaths. First floor.* Between it and the end of a dark, narrow passage terminated by a second door covered with green baize, a flight of stairs showed their first steps in the obscurity. To mount them undamaged the prospective client needed either previous acquaintance or a larger share of dexterity than falls to the common lot; for, in addition to being dark, they wound tortuously, and being uncarpeted, much

worn by traffic, and sharp at the edges, impressed literally upon the lower limbs the truth of the metaphor anent the steep and painful path a litigant has to tread. Neither did the bannisters afford material assistance to locomotion, being so shaky that to lean upon them was a flagrant temptation of providence; and altogether the first floor should have displayed particular charms to compensate for so much discomfort in attaining thereto. It did not, however, merely presenting to the view a replica of the obscure passage on the ground floor, and shadowy doors closed upon it, one of which Memory pushed open.

"Do you mind shutting it again?" requested Mr. Chagbody from his writing-table. "Thank you."

After complying, Memory leaned with his hands in his pockets against the tier of deed-boxes, and by an impish coincidence his head rested against that labelled *Mudge Estate*. He looked unutterably doleful, despite a perfection of toilet which would have cheered the heart of a modern Adonis, however despondent. The flower in his coat had cost half-a-crown.

"Hard at it," he remarked as mournfully as if that observation were the prelude to a dirge.

"Occasional application is requisite for a maintenance of the connection," replied Mr. Chagbody with a cumbersome attempt at irony.

"It's all very well to talk, Chagbody, when one is impervious to outside influences and interests."

"I never laid claim to such frigidity, so far as I am aware. In fact, the contrary is the case."

"I can't help going there," rambled on Memory, entirely uninterested in his partner's feelings; "and yet what good comes of it? None at all,—worse than none;—distraction, and

loss of sleep, and an appetite going fairly to ruin. I have spoken to that chap Smith."

"A remarkable instance of the effects of prepossession! Contrary to all precedent, Memory,—or, at least, *our* precedents—to show your hand, and contrary to the usages of society. What did he say?"

"Nothing at first. He let me go on until he was tired, then coolly disclosed the fact of his being a married man. It's a rum go, I can't help thinking."

"Ah!" commented Mr. Chagbody thoughtfully, placing his pen in its rack. "Strange—humph!"

"That clears him out of the way, and it made me pretty jubilant. But not for long; for what is the use of disposing of your most formidable opponent if you don't get any more forward yourself? The old man is friendly, and her sister is a most pleasant woman, and she herself don't seem to favour anyone in particular; and yet I stick in the same place,—dressings-down yesterday, kindness to-morrow. Still, Chagbody, there's one conviction keeps me up, even in face of circumstances which the most perseverin' might sink under without disgrace. The doctrine of affinity, Chagbody. Pooh! don't look incredulous; remember, you are a lawyer, always a lawyer, first and last a lawyer; *I*—am a man."

"A very ingenuous one, Memory, as is particularly shown in the traits of self-analysis and loquacity characteristic in youthful patients attacked by your disease."

"Being only a man," pursued Memory, "I cannot but be sensible to the influence of female attractiveness in its ordinary developments; but when it becomes transcendent and incomparable, and when the thought of its embodiment during absence sends me into a flabby condition super-

induced by cold perspiration, and actual encounter practically bereaves me of speech,—*then* I know I have found my affinity, Chagbody. The thrills and cold shivers that run through me—"

"Liver," interpolated Mr. Chagbody without the slightest intention of being rude; but among all the stolid ornaments of his profession there was none more stolid than he, and sympathy was a foible with which he had as little acquaintance as the study of Buddhist mythology.

"—Would be heart-breakin' if these were not at the same time permeated by a sub-flavour of transport. How marvellous is this flame that burns us, Chagbody! Though it has the power of draggin' to hell, it can also lift to heaven. Last week I met her at a dance. She was monopolised by a debased specimen of humanity the whole evening; and seemed to encourage him too,—for of such mad-denin' perversity is woman made. Imagine me,—gnashin' my teeth, figuratively, in the depths; imagine him,—wafted to the seventh heaven, and only by the agency of love's pinions. He had the most ignoble legs I ever saw, Chagbody, and to contemplate him, except by twilight, would bring on a shudder; yet he was, for a few short hours, of the angels!"

"Well," said Mr. Chagbody, rasping his heavy jaw with a thick finger and thumb meditatively, "I don't see what I can do. I cannot secure you a leasehold with the angels as you phrase it (somewhat profanely, unless allowances are made); and as to special pleading on your behalf, being no advocate, it is beyond my capabilities. Writing is my forte, as it is my livelihood. Whether I should draw up a formal proposal, setting forth tentatively the necessary provisions as to settlements and pin-money, is a question for you to decide.

That, I may say without undue presumption, I am well qualified by my knowledge of the law affecting marriage-contracts to undertake; I should, moreover, be fortified by a complete absence of bias or prepossession, and could accordingly maintain equity between antagonistic material interests without outraging my feelings upon one hand or exhibiting undue leniency upon the other. Shall I draft such an instrument for your perusal? You would fair-copy and sign it in your own hand, of course, retaining the original copy as a safeguard against future contingencies which might arise."

Memory groaned and shifted his head from the Mudge Estate deed-box (which had grown hard to the feel) to that containing the archives affecting Sir F. and Lady J. at the top of the next row.

"The proposition does not apparently commend itself," observed Mr. Chagbody perspicuously. "It was hardly to be expected. I assume your need is the typical one of cataloguing a varied succession of irresponsible impressions. You must have someone to confide in."

"I must," said Memory.

"Such a craving is not uncommon; but it did not enter into the ingredients wherewith I attained success."

"You—a bachelor!" retorted Memory with ineffable contempt. "It is really disgustin' to contemplate the slough of selfishness the unmarried must wallow in to accept contentedly such a condition."

"Memory, I am old enough to be your father—"

"I am gettin' sick of hearing of other people's antiquity," interrupted Memory very irascibly.

"And if I do not enter into your personal experiences, it is a puerile *non sequitur* to assume that I repudiate their possibility or the occurrence

of similar feelings in parallel cases. Singleness does not necessarily imply lack of human instincts, as I can testify."

"Hulloa!" exclaimed Memory, rousing from his lethargic despair, and a fancied fellow-feeling making him wondrous kind,—or at least curious, the two being often interchangeable terms. "Have you had an affair in your time?"

"Pooh! nonsense!" replied the lawyer, a faint tinge of colour suffusing his heavy grey features. "I am speaking from the observation which must automatically secrete and store up a multitude of incidents during a long life. They teach me that, even while I cannot participate in your emotions, to deny their reality would be to incur a charge of mental ophthalmia. But all this is not germane; I beg your pardon for growing diffuse. The contention I was about to put forward was in support of the generally accepted theory that in these matters an individual must conduct his own case until concrete considerations are involved, when he will do better to take unprejudiced advice. You have not yet reached this consummation, so that, beyond enacting the rôle of a receptacle for rhapsodies, as somebody inevitably must, I cannot help you. And I have a consultation in half-an-hour," added Mr. Chagbody, "in the suit of Boggins and Wife, which concerns you also, I think."

"Then you think I ought to peg away?" observed Memory, making mournful preparations to look up the suit of Boggins and Wife.

"There are the documents," said Mr. Chagbody; "I had them conveyed from your room as you did not appear to be under the necessity of consulting them. As regards perseverance, it is my firm conviction that by such a medium alone is any lasting success attained."

"That is all very well, Chagbody, but my opportunities for meeting her and conversin' are limited by the code of society; and hang it, you know, how on earth can I peg away in secret? Writin' letters to her is an expedient, but I can't in decency write daily, even if there is a plausible excuse ready to hand."

Mr. Chagbody pondered for a moment; and if his senior partner had been of an observant turn, he might have noticed that Mr. Chagbody pondered deeply. "You would intimate that with additional facilities for intercommunication, your prospects would become more substantial?"

"Exactly," assented Memory. "She would see more of me, you know; and consequently perceive more clearly the fervour of my devotions, and the anguish I suffer from her flirtations with so many objects utterly unworthy even to tie her little shoes."

"It is a coincidence which strengthens a project of my own," said Mr. Chagbody, half to himself. "Odd that it should present itself in this light! It never occurred to me before."

"What!" exclaimed Memory in a tone no words can transcribe. "You thought of marrying her!"

"Don't be childish, I beg, Memory," retorted Mr. Chagbody with heavy impatience.

"You growled something about projects."

"Certainly I did; but your construction of my remark suggests buffoonery."

"Thanks! To be funny is not my idea of fame, or even of gentlemanly behaviour."

"I am in perfect accord with you," replied Mr. Chagbody, who, having risen from a sphere whose manners and customs are more primitive than refined, naturally entertained a rigorous conception of the dictates of gentility.

"Then what did you mean?" persisted Memory.

"The movement of events must determine that, by your leave. I am constitutionally averse from predicting the results of any given conception,—a cautiousness in which practice of the law has confirmed me. I will advise you of the outcome of my intentions should consideration finally decide me as to the desirability of putting them into effect."

With this oracular utterance Memory was fain to be content, and he wandered aimlessly into his own office. "Work," he murmured. "Oh, hang the work!" and composed himself to indite a voluminous epistle breathing devotion to the tyrannous Bud. As he had not entirely taken leave of his senses it was not destined for delivery; but it soothed him to write it.

As there are some people who rarely, except by inadvertence, speak or act truthfully, so there are others to whom the concealment of even their most intimate thoughts is an impossibility. Both classes are a little wearisome. Memory belonged to the latter, and it is a well-known fact that love is the strongest stimulant to maudlin loquacity. He had to pour out his suffering to someone, or risk spontaneous combustion, and Chagbody served the office of confidant admirably in one respect,—from force of custom and natural predilection he could keep a secret tighter than the irritated oyster locks his shell.

How extraordinary and beautiful are the effects of evolution and the refining influences of civilisation! Comparatively late in history (we have it on the most unimpeachable authority) it was the custom of the swain in love, or who imagined himself to be in love, to signalise his condition by an exceeding slovenliness of attire; to wit, a beard neglected,

hose ungartered, a bonnet unbanded, a sleeve unbuttoned, a shoe untied, and everything about him demonstrating a careless desolation. Now it is all the other way. Memory sighed tempestuously, and felt that his lot was indeed cast in a vale of tears; but when his gaze wandered to the glossy lacquering of his natty boots, he felt there might still be hope. It is a lamentable fact for the etherealists that one cannot be superlatively well-dressed and entirely miserable at one and the same time. Memory gathered a gloomy pleasure in the execution of his toilet; a pleasing, anxious joy that could not be gainsaid and only accurately computed by an investigation of his cheque-book. In that volume the name of his haberdasher and his tailor occurred so frequently as to denote the completeness of his preoccupation. The scores of cravats and the bewildering luxuriance of gorgeous waistcoats that he purchased baffle enumeration. The nosegays daily supplied for his coat, if collectively displayed, might have furnished forth a flower-show. To say that sartorial magnificence sufficed Mr. Memory, would be doing him a gross injustice; but indubitably it denoted his passion through the medium of a desire to appear at his best advantage in the eyes of the goddess; and when by great good fortune he contrived the opportunity to exhibit himself in half-a-dozen different costumes in as many days, he felt that something had been accomplished. In this Memory was not the phenomenon a superficial critic might declare; he was the representative of a youthful and cultured generation in love,—the type of many who after all are wise; for what would the modern Rosalind say if the modern Orlando exhibited himself in the modern equivalent for ungartered hose, and what are the

chances of the modern Orlando who has but one suit in his wardrobe?

He passed into the clerks' office—a cheery apartment compared with some dungeons, and beside quite a large number of rabbit-hutches commodious. Through the window (provided it were cleaned first) could be descried a landscape whose variety of features combined a blank wall, two rain-water pipes, and a tank with half its cover collapsing. At the senior partner's appearance his clerks developed symptoms of acute studiousness, and he surveyed them thoughtfully, of course in connection with the one subject occupying his mind. He was well off, but their salaries, in the aggregate (not individually) amounted to a large sum,—sufficient to maintain an extra equipage for Bud in a certain ideal household. What a pity they could not live upon air! What a pity they were there at all, if they must be paid! But, no; on subsequent consideration he withdrew this sentiment, for no clerks meant no income; and Bud at least should be regaled with sweetmeats and candied rose-leaves for daily aliment, and they could not be purchased for nothing. Also, the better instincts, with which he was adequately equipped, arose and rebuked him; the clerks were hard-working machines and worthy their hire; he could not, without a pang, have turned them into the street even for Bud,—and that was a noble admission considering all things.

His own room looked upon the square. It was not an enlivening prospect; the spiked railings were unsympathetic, the sparrows vulgar. One could not linger over either and dream of Bud, but the room itself contained tokens of her, if one knew where to search. A pencil-sketch of herself, by herself (not very like, to say the truth), whose disappearance

from a cabinet in Colonel Gex's drawing-room had never been explained, lay hid behind an almanack upon the mantel-piece; in a table-drawer, carefully locked, lay a dance-programme, and below it a sheet of tissue-paper enveloped a dainty glove which gave out the ghost of a faint perfume; and in the same drawer a bunch of violets withered in their winding of silver wire. It has been estimated by a statistical individual, who is entitled to more credit than credence, that man devours so many score droves of oxen, so many hundred flocks of sheep, and imbibes so many thousand hogsheads of liquids during his corporeal existence; another ingenious creature has computed to an inch the miles of beard shaved off between the first proud exercise of the razor and its final abandonment with all earthly cares; but none yet would appear to have demonstrated the total equivalent in horse-power expended upon trifles outside the gross realities of life. It is a regrettable fact in many ways; for beside opening to scientific exploration a field of original research, and so diverting sages from the well-worn grooves in which it is customary for most sages to vegetate, the results of their enquiry could not fail to illuminate and startle an age whose watchword is utilitarianism. To take the solitary instance of Lancelot Memory, it might be safely affirmed that a tabulated comparison of the energy he respectively bestowed upon his work and upon his stolen mementoes of Bud,—taking them in and out of their seclusion, rhapsodising over them, dusting them with a silk handkerchief especially detailed for the duty, and so on—would have surprised even his enchained intellects; and certainly would have paid high tribute to the stability of a business able to endure with so little atten-

tion from its nominal chief. Lacking this cold douche from the regions of actuality, however, Memory pursued his fancies unchecked. Covenants and cases for counsel temporarily passed beyond his ken; oaths, assignations, affirmations (in the strictly legal acceptance of those terms) troubled him not; procedure, precedent, red-tape, technical obscurities, charges and counter-charges, summonses, writs, distrains, rules of evidence, interrogatories, systematised variations on the great theme of judicial truth in contradistinction to lay truth, and the thousand other niceties of his profession were practically relegated to oblivion. "Chagbody must bestir himself and keep things straight until I am straight," argued Memory; "when I can, I will buckle to again."

Mr. Chagbody fulfilled what was required of him, both from habit and proclivity. It was natural for him to work; only then was he at home—solemn, decorous, ponderously respectable. But for once, at the consultation to which he had drawn his partner's attention, he belied himself so far as to exhibit preoccupation. A tinge of gout—respectable disease, that, much and rightly affected by your self-made man, who, as he has made himself, can assuredly make his own fleshly weaknesses—a tinge of gout explained Mr. Chagbody's unprofessional abstraction. But he was also engaged in weighing the *pros* and *cons* of a proposition whose outcome might either gratify a desire or precipitate humiliation,—a predicament quite as unpleasant and much less gentlemanly than any produced by an untimely attack of gout.

CHAPTER XIX.

"HM!" grunted Colonel Gex, apostrophising himself in the glass; "hair looks deuced spiky."

After a violent application of his brushes, he surveyed his physiognomy again resentfully. The scrutiny disclosed no improvement to the unaided vision. He fumbled among the articles on the dressing-table for his eyeglass, eventually discovered it in the bed, and looked once more. Undoubtedly his hair was, as he said, spiky, and indisposed to lie evenly; moreover his tongue, he found, on presenting it for inspection as if the mirror harboured a medical practitioner, did not wear the hue of health. Colonel Gex, receiving corroboration of his suspicions with a very bad grace, proceeded to dress himself slowly and in a quick temper.

"A man can't seek distraction from the worries of life without having to pay the piper," he murmured. "Might as well give up seeking distraction if it weren't so cursedly impossible." Indulging in this fragment of philosophy, Colonel Gex proceeded to breakfast.

Alice, presiding behind the silver urn, rose as he passed and bent down, for she was the taller, to bestow her morning salutation.

"Where is Bud?" he snapped, accepting the embrace passively.

"Not yet down, Papa; she was late last night."

"So were you."

"Coffee, Papa?"

"Certainly not. I won't be put off in this airy fashion. Respect for their parent is a forgotten art with my children; I either get cool contempt or am treated like a baby. Why is she not down? I was late last night, but I have the decency to appear at breakfast betimes."

The tall clock on the staircase could be heard striking half-past ten as the Colonel concluded his peevish homily. He grunted and glared at the comestibles prepared for his repast. Fish was there, bacon, and another hot dish; on the sideboard beef and—

ugh!—ham; near at hand—ugh!—butter and rich cream. He shuddered. Intuitively the footman brought soda-water and dry toast; a frugal repast highly commendable in one able to satiate himself with the fatness of the earth, and, like much else ostensibly commendable, indulged in from motives of expediency. Alice sipped her tea slowly; she had finished long before, but it was one of her rules to bear him company at his meals, however irregular they might be. He never showed gratitude for this attention, though he would have grumbled had it been neglected. Colonel Gex thoroughly understood the whole art and mystery of selfishness.

"Don't you think we should all be the better for a little quiet life for a change?" inquired Alice after a pause in which the Colonel drank a great deal of soda-water, nibbled a very little toast, and threw the crusts at Bud's cat, which disdainfully ignored them.

"That means I should; it's just the sort of filial observation I should expect a daughter of mine to make."

"I think you have altered much of late, Papa," said Alice, meeting his shifty gaze with her steady brown eyes.

"I dare say, miss; but may I enquire how the deuce it affects you?"

"It affects us all, Papa, to have you unsettled."

"What do you mean to imply by unsettled?" retorted her father irascibly.

"You are hardly ever at home now, Papa, unless we have a dinner-party or some other entertainment; it is always the club or another person's house that claims your time. You leave everything to Mr. Smith and myself; you are excitable and nervous, and suffer from headaches, such as I know you have at this moment, almost every morning."

"Confound it!" exclaimed Colonel

Gex, very obviously anything but pleased by his daughter's vigilant solicitude. "It seems I am to be subjected to the attentions of a feminine inquisitor!"

"Do not be unreasonable, Papa; someone must be alert to keep our life smooth. Bud is a child; there remains but me, and I am merely a woman, and therefore perhaps given to exaggeration. Still I cannot help noticing that you are restless,—anxious about something, I think; and I wish to be your confidant, if it be possible, as I am your housekeeper."

Colonel Gex helped himself to more soda-water. "I beg you won't get maudlin, Alice," he observed with laborious politeness. "Sentiment is my detestation."

"That has never been my failing, Papa; unless I were practical I should not be troubling about you now; but let it be as you wish."

"I am obliged for your consideration," replied the Colonel.

Alice rose and prepared to go about the numerous household duties that required all her tact and organisation to fulfil adequately in her father's establishment. She had got to the door when Colonel Gex abruptly descended from his pedestal of independence and called her back.

"Yes, Papa?"

"Explain yourself, my dear child."

"In what way?" asked Alice. "I have told you of my apprehensions. There is nothing more. It is neither my duty nor my place to expostulate or give advice; but I cannot surely be accused of undutiful presumption in thinking that you would be happier for less social dissipation, and I know our friends would benefit by your abstention."

"How the devil should it affect them?"

"A great deal, I consider," replied Alice, with an undercurrent of spirited

assertion very rare in addressing her father. "You have become so nervous and irritable that you are rude to them each in turn. To take one instance, perhaps the most flagrant, I admit, you have once or twice lately addressed Mr. Gilstrapp as if he were an insolent manservant instead of our best and oldest friend."

"Walpole!—pooh, he don't mind; he knows my little ways."

"That is no excuse, Papa; and in any case, your little ways, as you call them, have developed very unpleasantly of late. Why should he be a particular target? On the contrary, he should above all others be treated with consideration, whatever you may feel or exhibit toward the rest of the world. He has done us innumerable kindnesses. How should we have fared in our poverty of but a short while ago without his unobtrusive and never-failing help? If you have an atom of conscience, Papa, there is only one answer. Even now, when pecuniary aid is not requisite, he finds means to serve us in a thousand little ways which all our grand friends would never trouble their heads about. I am not blind, Papa, and I know he has often restrained you at play; he is another father to Bud, a counsellor to me when you refuse to be bothered about the many affairs in which a man's voice is necessary. He discovered Mr. Smith for us—"

"Cursedly officious of him, too," interposed Colonel Gex angrily.

Alice, standing with her hands on the back of a chair, and slightly flushed from her unwonted show of indignation, looked at the Colonel in surprise. "Are you not satisfied with Mr. Smith?"

"Certainly, my dear, entirely,—a most admirable secretary in all respects, whom I esteem highly. If you can find means to convey my opinion incidentally to him, I shall

be glad ; it will encourage him in his work."

"I do not think he requires encouragement."

"I am convinced he does not. By the way," said Colonel Gex casually, "that reminds me. While we are on the topic: without attaching too much weight to the pictures your—er—affection has conjured up, I should rather like to know whether—frankly, my dear Alice—whether you frankly consider I am ever uncivil to him?"

"Frankly, then, Papa, Mr. Smith is the solitary person you treat with uniform politeness."

"Precisely," replied Colonel Gex. Under the impulse of some strong incentive, he so far abrogated his usual furtiveness as to fix his glass and stare at Alice hard. "Commendable in me, I think? Blood will tell, my child, and the signs of breeding remain in spite of any worries. Your true gentleman, my child, may flout his superiors, insult his equals—but he always has consideration for his subordinates. It is my desire that Smith should never have the faintest ground for complaint in the conduct of any of us; the poor young man is in a dependent position, and as such he claims our sympathy. If you find me, under stress of circumstances, departing from this course, I beg you will make it your business to inform me of the fact. Am I understood?"

"Perfectly, Papa."

"He has my sincerest pity," continued Colonel Gex, growing quite feverishly philanthropic. "I would do anything for that most estimable young man; and it is my desire that you and Bud for once deign to take example from your father."

"Mr. Smith and I have a mutual respect for one another, I believe," said Alice quietly.

"What does that mean, eh?" enquired her father suspiciously. "You confounded women can never come straight to the point. *You* and Smith—yes; but *Bud* and Smith—no. Eh?"

"Bud carries out your desires a little too fully at times, I think," replied Alice, seating herself and showing a faint wrinkle of displeasure on her forehead, "She is inclined to be flighty with all men, and yet she is so innocent and gay that one cannot harshly take her to task or scold her when she laughs at warnings; but her incautiousness with Mr. Smith makes me uneasy at times. Should she have no other amusement in hand, off she flies to the study, shuts herself in there with him, and chatters the whole day away."

"There is no harm in that, you little stupid; he makes no secret of his being married."

"No. I have said I respect him; I also trust him, and have heard him expostulating and telling her in his distant fashion that he would rather be alone, that he has a quantity of work to get through, and so on. I doubt whether she is not encouraged in her freakishness by his very reserve; for she is an inveterate tease, and never so happy as when exercising her fascinations upon those least inclined to appreciate them. I make allowances for that: it is a womanly foible; but I wish she would be more guarded. Mr. Smith is Mr. Smith, Papa, nothing more; if my estimate of him is correct, she will incur no disparaging comments by his actions, but she may bring them upon herself by her own. I *do* wish she would be more careful, dear little Bud!"

The backslidings of the younger sister, though they gave her much more occasion for anxious thought than was ever guessed, never aroused

the stern precisian in Alice; the mere mention of the pet name, as now, was sufficient to call an indulgent smile to her lips.

"Smith objects then, does he? I rather supposed it would be the other way about," remarked Colonel Gex, tugging at his moustache.

"One cannot assume that, Papa; he would be a rare exception to mankind if it were so. I only mean to explain that she is inviting danger without connivance from him, and that you would be doing unwisely to urge her as you have been urging me."

"You are sure Smith ain't annoyed by her persistence?" enquired the Colonel, harping upon his point.

"Why should he be?" replied Alice rather coldly. "I do not understand your attitude, Papa. Are you throwing them together,—and if so, for what purpose?"

Colonel Gex snorted, and turned to the pile of unopened letters lying by his plate. Some he knew to be business communications, and put aside at once for transference to Anthony; others he pettishly opened with his knife and glanced at perfunctorily. At the bottom of the heap remained one addressed in a formal clerk's hand unknown to him, and he debated whether his secretary or himself should enjoy the first perusal of it; after a moment's hesitation he decided upon the latter course, and tore it open. The letter, written upon a large square of stiff paper, ran as follows:—

MEMORY & MEMORY,
Solicitors, Commissioners for Oaths.

LANCELOT MEMORY. 23, *Johnson's Inn,*
F. CHAGBODY. *Fleet Street,*
London,
7th October, 18—.

DEAR SIR,

I propose, subject to your convenience, calling upon you to-morrow,

the 8th instant, at 4 o'clock post meridian for the purpose of discussing a proposition which it is my desire to submit for your consideration, and, I trust, your acquiescence. I would venture to beg that the matter in question, being of some weight, be not prejudiced by the resurrection of anything which has passed between us years ago—that you will be so good as to eliminate all recollection of previous misunderstanding and meet me with a clear mind.

Trusting that the young ladies are in the enjoyment of the health and spirits which constitute the prerogatives of youth,

I am, dear Sir,
Your obliged and faithful Servant,
FRANCIS CHAGBODY.

Though the envelope was addressed by a clerk, the missive itself was in Mr. Chagbody's stiff caligraphy throughout, and sealed with his own seal.

"Formal ass!" muttered Colonel Gex, after he had read it through twice. "What does he mean by his infernal rhodomontade? Some trifling nonsense, I'll swear, which his wind-baggy profession won't let him put into plain English."

Though he affected contempt, Colonel Gex devoured the document a third time with ill-disguised symptoms of uneasiness. Finally he jerked it across to Alice and awaited her verdict biting his finger-nails.

"Well?" he demanded impatiently when she laid it down.

"It is some business-matter, presumably. All legal questions are still dealt with by you, are they not?"

"Yes, my dear, that is so; Smith has nothing to do with them. It seems the most likely explanation; but I'm hanged if I won't have a witness," replied the Colonel, apparently relieved by his daughter's translation. "None of his confounded mysteries with me! He must learn I have got nothing to be ashamed of, and everything connected with my affairs shall be as open as the day.

Smith shall be present, by gad, and if he don't like it, let him leave his precious mission undivulged."

Alice smiled in affirmation as she left him muttering and growling over his untasted breakfast and his empty soda-water bottles. She certainly concurred with her father in believing that he required a practical supporter in most sublunary affairs where amusement pure and simple was not the only concern.

Left to himself, Colonel Gex frowned over Chagbody's letter again; then, the scrutiny yielding no satisfactory results, he thrust it into his pocket, and began fidgeting aimlessly about the room. The footman came in to clear away. Though the man was well-trained and deft as need be, his master glowered at him to catch him tripping, and swore at him for a clumsy dolt. Where Alice's ready and unobtrusive observation was aroused it seldom misled her: Colonel Gex had changed very much of late, and for the worse.

He was as spruce and well-groomed as ever,—in fact, he wasted an increasing time upon personal adornment; but in other respects time or worry (an effective auxiliary of the old Gleaner, and less patient in its methods) had told upon him grievously. His hair was thinner; his cheeks had visibly shrunk; his ordinarily lean hands had also lost flesh until they bore an unpleasant resemblance to claws, and they fluttered ceaselessly. Unkind people who troubled themselves to observe (and it is a remarkable fact how much more observant are unkind than kind people—and a nice question for the curious to decide whether the analytical faculty is a cause or an effect)

put the trembling hands down to drink; but though Colonel Gex had never been an abstemious man, and within the last few months had increased his potations, he was seldom or never seen intoxicated. People with a secret, or a gnawing anxiety, though they often succumb to the temptations of the bottle, exhibit few, sometimes no, visible tokens of its effect, where the robust organization would be completely overthrown.

But beside his physical failings were other more significant lapses of manner and demeanour, causing him to fall into the errors of conduct to which his daughter had alluded. True, she was the first person to do so; but she was of the family circle, a community notorious for frankness of speech; and he was a rich man, to whom much more is forgiven or condoned than the indigent can ever hope to expect. He had grown terribly restless, morose, and preoccupied. In a word, despite his unremitting pursuit of pleasure, it was clear that the Colonel found life a trying business. To those given to pious bathos he would have formed a subject for a homily. The *Mirage of Wealth*, as exemplified in the person of Colonel Gex, was a theme ready to hand for his friends; but he escaped the distinction of posing as a warning (the next best thing to posing as an example) for two reasons. One was that his friends were not of the description given to descanting upon abstract morality; the other was that, so long as they could participate in his hospitality and enjoy the society of his daughters, his friends were quite content to leave his soul alone.

(To be continued.)

MR. BLACKMORE AND "THE MAID OF SKER."

IT is common report that *THE MAID OF SKER*, and not *LOENA DOONE*, was of all his novels the late Mr. Blackmore's favourite, and many have been puzzled by his preference. There was much, however, to account for it in the circumstances under which the novel was written, though perhaps it was more especially due to the pride which Mr. Blackmore felt in the drawing of one of the chief characters. To me it would seem that only those who are well acquainted with South Wales and its people can fully realise the genius which inspires the book. I have lived for several years past just two miles away from the "vast lonely house" of Sker and in the very parish of Newton Nottage where Davy Llewellyn schemed and poached; and my love for the book, which began in the old novel-room of the Oxford Union some twenty-five years ago, has of late been ever deepened and widened, till it is no longer to me a subject of wonder that Mr. Blackmore set *THE MAID OF SKER* on the highest pinnacle of his esteem.

The Maid herself is a delightful character, and as Mr. Blackmore drew the infantile ways and prattle of Bardie from a favourite niece, it was natural for him to regard her with particular affection. But the masterpiece of the book is Davy Llewellyn. To say that he is a typical Welshman would be an insult to Wales, which has far nobler types of character to boast of; yet nowhere else than in Wales could exactly such a character be found, for he is as truly Welsh as Sir Hugh Evans, with whom he has several points in common.

But, saving Shakespeare's reverence, Blackmore's picture is even better than his, and such as needed the combination of rare qualities of appreciation in the artist. A Welshman might have understood Davy as well, but he would have been to him too familiar a type to deserve artistic treatment; whereas an ordinary Englishman would have sketched Davy as an unredeemable villain. Blackmore with rare insight saw him exactly as he was, and recognised his possibilities. About Newton Nottage people will tell you that Davy Llewellyn was a well-known Newton poacher, and will point out where his house, lately pulled down, once stood by the village-green and facing the ancient church. They will show you the inns that he frequented, the *Jolly Sailors*, and the *Welcome to Town*, next door to the chapel, which are unaltered. But they see nothing wonderful in the portrait of Davy; it is to them a mere transcript of fact, tricked out with some foolish embellishments. Blackmore did not even change the name of his original; he only transferred him to an earlier generation and introduced him to picturesque adventures. But in taking an ordinary and everyday character from the real life of a Welsh village, he has by the force of genius invested it with a peculiar charm. "The humble but warm-hearted Cambrian," garrulous and conceited, proud of his ancestor the bard and of his Welsh nationality, but ever ready to serve his own interest and not over scrupulous as to the methods of doing so; skilful in selling fish with a gamesome odour; cautious and crafty

and subtle as any Boer; submissive to his betters, but, when provoked, dangerous (take, for instance, "his righteous action" of burning Parson Chowne's ricks), an arrant poacher and with a weakness for rum and water,—is yet withal brave, upright according to his standards, a good Church and State man, popular generally with his neighbours (except Sandy Macraw), kind to his Polly, and above all is one who loves little children and whom little children love. It was by no means easy to make so complex a character attractive, yet while we shake our heads at Davy's weaknesses, we love him the more for them. We, like Miss Carey, even rejoice at the wild justice of his revenge on Chowne, and chuckle with him over his forcible conquest of Brother Hezekiah Perkins; nay, so good-natured do we become to his failings, that we not only believe at last that he out-manceuvred Chowne, but are not offended by his hint that his was the genius that won the battle of the Nile.

But there was probably another cause for Blackmore's partiality, besides his fondness for the characters of his favourite novel. The district of Newton Nottage was one in which he spent some of his happiest days, when he saw his youth before him and possessed the fullest and keenest capacity of enjoyment afforded by a nature that was always eminently sensitive to enjoyment. At Nottage Court he often spent his vacations when he was an undergraduate of Exeter College, Oxford, and there he began to write *THE MAID OF SKER*. It was then owned by his uncle, the Reverend Henry Hey Knight, who was a scholar and antiquary of considerable repute, and it is at this day in the occupation of Mr. Blackmore's cousins. It is an old Elizabethan house with a chequered history, and at one time was owned by a certain Cradock Nowell, whose me-

morial tablet is still conspicuous on the wall of Newton Church, and whose name at least must be familiar to lovers of the novelist and to readers of old volumes of Macmillan's Magazine. Another name connected with the house is that of Lougher, from a branch of which family Blackmore himself was descended. Colonel Lougher will be remembered as the good squire of Candleston Court, whom Davy Llewellyn esteemed "one of the finest and noblest men" it was ever his hap to meet. The name of Candleston is taken from an old ruined castle not far away from Newton Church, and though there was no Colonel Lougher living at the time of the battle of the Nile, there was a somewhat notable descendant of the Lougher family then resident in the neighbourhood, Colonel Knight of Tythegston Court. Tythegston Court is a fine mansion, still owned by relations of Blackmore, two miles from Newton on the other side of Danygraig Hill, or, as Davy Llewellyn calls it, "Newton Down, where the glow-worms are most soft and sweet."

Nottage Court is a veritable museum of curiosities, the most remarkable of which is some old tapestry brought from Tewkesbury Abbey. But lovers of Blackmore would look with even greater interest upon an antique oak bedstead, finely carved with figures of Joseph and his brethren, on which the novelist himself often slept, and on which his father died during sleep, and upon some chessmen which Blackmore himself turned, for chess was always a great hobby of his. Nor would they despise some relics of the old Dissenting divine, hymn-writer, and epigrammatist, Dr. Doddridge, whose granddaughter was the grandmother of Richard Doddridge Blackmore. His chair and a copy of *HICKES'S DEVOTIONS*, with notes in his own

handwriting, are among these. The book belonged to his daughter Mercy, and suggests curious reflections, for its contents are of a much higher type of churchmanship than would be usually acceptable in a Dissenting household.

Nottage Court stands at the eastern extremity of the quaint hamlet of Nottage, whose houses are huddled together like a brood of little chickens crowding for protection beside their mother-hen. Nottage itself stands at the apex of a triangle, and at the angles of its base are the other two villages of Newton and Porthcawl, which, with Nottage, make up the parish of Newton Nottage. Porthcawl boasts a harbour, a railway-station, a large hotel, and other modern improvements, and has more than a local reputation for its exceedingly bracing air. But with all these advantages it is deplorably modern, and Newton and Nottage look down upon it from the dizzy height of their antiquity. Davy Llewellyn could not have lived at Porthcawl; it would not have suited a man of his ancient lineage, though it was good enough for Sandy Macraw, whom local tradition identifies with one McBride, whose relations still live and flourish there. As was in former times the difference between the Welsh bard and the envious Scotchman, such is still the difference between the autochthonous aristocracy of Newton and the democratic aliens and immigrants of its upstart rival. But perhaps we are more tolerant now than our predecessors. There was no love lost between Davy Llewellyn and Sandy Macraw; Sandy would not have been disinclined to get rid of his rival. One day when he, that is McBride, was attending a cousin of Blackmore's who was shooting on the sandhills, they chanced to catch Davy poaching, and McBride "half in fun and

half in malice," shouted to his companion to shoot him. We do not now meditate shooting Newton people.

I have mentioned Porthcawl because it was the home of Sandy Macraw, and also because, apart from *THE MAID OF SKER*, its name is more generally known than that of Newton Nottage. It lies on the Glamorgan-shire coast some thirty miles west of Cardiff and twenty south-east of Swansea. Sker House is two miles westward, and its loneliness is now relieved by troops of golf-players, for there are excellent links in its neighbourhood. The name should be pronounced *Scare*. Blackmore took his title from a Welsh love-song written in the last century by a harper of Newton concerning one of the daughters of the tenant of Sker House. When Delushy calls herself *Y Ferch o'r Scer* in answer to Sir Philip Bampfylde's inquiry, she uses the Welsh title of the song.

It is, however, with Newton, next to Nottage, that Blackmore himself was more particularly connected, for one of his uncles was rector of the parish and ministered in its old church, and in Newton churchyard his father lies buried. The inscription on the gravestone, written by Blackmore himself in that rhythmic, half metrical prose which is characteristic of much of his work, is worth quoting.

I. H. S. After three-score years and four, spent, from infancy to age, in labour, faith, and piety, the Reverend John Blackmore, of Ashford in the County of Devon, was borne in his sleep to that repose which awaiteth the children of God. September 24th or 25th, 1858.

The grave stands in an exquisitely pretty spot; the old Norman church with its massive tower looks over the churchyard with its graves, planted often with fragrant flowers, and over the green outside, where the geese

gabble and the children play, even as Bardie and Bunny played of old. The well of St. John the Baptist, famed from ancient time for its curious ebb and flow, is hard by on the edge of the sandhills; but old Davy could not now sit there with his cronies and the children around him, nor can children go down the steps to draw water, for the well is fastened up, and the water is drawn from an ugly pump outside. Eastward and southward stretch the brown wastes of the sandhills, grim and lonesome, and yet at times not without a strange beauty of their own. Though in winter little grows on them but long pale reeds and a little herbage with long patches of bright yellowish-green moss, and here and there a purplish spurge, later on wild pansies help to clothe their nakedness, and there are hollows that are the home of innumerable white violets; and in summer they are bright with the purplish blue of the viper's bugloss, and the gray-green leaves of the yellow poppy, and the lovely burnet roses. Eastward they rise higher, like South African *kopjes*, and there is a wilderness of sand, to cross which on a hot summer's day is to gain some idea of the heat of the tropics. And ever near are the waters of the Bristol Channel, beyond which stand forth the bright hills of Somerset and Devon. It would have been strange indeed if so striking a scene had not impressed a man so sensitive to Nature's various aspects as was Blackmore; nor is it wonderful that he should have given the first place in his esteem to a work portraying so skilfully the rare scenes and characters of a neighbourhood that otherwise, from different causes, must have held a high place in his affections.

It cannot be said that *THE MAID OF SKER* is popular in the parish of

Newton Nottage. There are two small circulating libraries at Porthcawl, but neither of them contains it, though *LORNA DOONE* and *ALICE LORRAINE* are there, and we boast our acquaintance with the novels of popular authors which it is fashionable to read. Occasionally indeed a copy of *THE MAID OF SKER* may be seen in a shop-window, but this is rather a concession to the needs of visitors than the response to a demand from Porthcawl itself, and it is a rare event. Visitors learn nothing of the book from the guide to Porthcawl, although this is a creditable production of its class, written by a professional man who knows the district well, and records other literary matters connected therewith; but of Blackmore and his novel he utters never a syllable. An article on Porthcawl, written by one of ourselves, was recently published in a magazine much esteemed in Wales; it mentioned all other points that tend to our glory and honour but was silent about *THE MAID OF SKER*. I used once to marvel at this policy of silence, but I do so now no longer; it must be acknowledged that as a rule we mildly resent the book. "Yes, I have read Blackmore," said one of us the other day, "but I don't think much of him. There is a lot of bosh in *THE MAID OF SKER*, making out as if we were all a set of poachers here. *LORNA DOONE* is better; but for characters give me Dickens." I am afraid that the general verdict of such portion of the parish as has read the book would endorse this statement that it contains "a lot of bosh;" but it is probably considered more patriotic not to read it at all; I have certainly never seen it in any other house than my own, and I should be inclined to estimate the total number of copies in the whole parish, which contains

some eighteen hundred inhabitants, as less than a dozen. For we do not consider Davy Llewellyn a credit to so ancient and historic a parish as ours; his poaching and his weakness for selling gamesome fish stick in our throats, and there are also remarks in the novel, such as that respecting a Welsh hurrah ("as good as the screech of a wild-cat trapped"), which are held to be dishonouring to Wales. Some over-curious persons too, have asked whether one or two characters even less respectable than Davy Llewellyn had their originals in our parish, a question which we deem grossly impertinent. We acknowledge Davy Llewellyn and Sandy Macraw, but we confess to no more. When rash, intruding folk question us closely on various points, we say that the incidents of the book are so familiar to us that we have never troubled to read it through, and we change the conversation.

Our attitude in Newton Nottage is reflected in Wales generally. It is an axiom with some Welshmen that no Englishman can really understand Welsh life and character, and Davy Llewellyn, lovable as he is despite all his trickiness, is not a type which such readily admit to be accurate. Daniel Owen's realistic sketches of Calvinistic life in North Wales, clear, true, and unpoetical as photographs, and Allen Raine's tender and graceful idylls of Cardiganshire villages are read and appreciated; but *THE MAID OF SKER* is ignored by Welsh opinion. Yet, as a Welsh lady has told me that she has failed to read the book through because it contains too much of Davy Llewellyn, and she knows too many Davy Llewellyns already and heartily dislikes them, the reason for the low esteem of *THE MAID OF SKER* in Wales may be not necessarily lack of appreciation, but an appreciation

that is too vivid. It is a kindly picture after all that Blackmore has drawn; Daniel Owen has drawn a much harsher one of a tricky Welshman. But Wales yet awaits her novelist; for she has nobler types than any novelist has yet attempted. Shakespeare alone has been able to give us not merely Sir Hugh Evans, who is common "Welsh flannel," but Fluellen, the valorous gentleman, and Glendower, the mystic seer, who could call spirits from the vasty deep. Blackmore knew the Welsh gentleman, and the hand that sketched good Colonel Lougher might have done more than it did: amid heroic circumstances Colonel Lougher would have been heroic; but Blackmore would have stopped short of investing a Welsh hero with Celtic glamour and mystery, for his genius had its limitations. It is perhaps only in the Mabinogion, and some lyrics of the Welsh poets, that one can find literary expression of the beauty of the ideal Welshman of perfect stature. Giraldus Cambrensis knew Wales well, and he never uttered anything truer than his judgment that when a Welshman was good he was better than the good men of other races, and when he was bad he was worst of all. Even in the drab existence of the present day there are spots of brilliant colour in Welsh life, though perhaps the background of the historic novel would suit best the pictures of the ideal hero of Wales.

Of Blackmore himself I can say but little. Newton Nottage never knew him; it thinks nothing of him now, and knows not and reckons not what the world outside thinks. In Nottage Court, however, his memory is beloved. It is quite true that he ranked high his later work, *SPRINGHAVEN*. He told one of his cousins that he considered it the best of his

books, a judgment which is not necessarily opposed to the general report that THE MAID OF SKER was his favourite. But he rarely talked of his writings, even to his relations. He had a keen sense of the ludicrous and incongruous, and he detested fussy, pretentious people, and if forced to see them, was glum, taciturn, and miserable in their company, though afterwards he would laugh over his experience.

At Nottage Court there is a photograph of him taken in his later years, that appears to me very characteristic. He is seated under a canopy of vines laden with magnificent grapes, and as he is but a small figure in a corner of the photograph, while the greater space is occupied by the vinery and the vines, it is a little difficult at first to decide to which it is designed to direct the attention, to the cultivator or to his crops. But it is the figure on which one settles at last, with its expression of quietude and satisfaction, sitting in solitude in the great vinery. It is the husbandman re-

joicing in the labour of his hands, sitting much as the old Hebrew sat under his own vine and under his own fig-tree. The picture is symbolic of the shy and reserved Blackmore, who lived apart from men and cities, who would direct attention to his works rather than to himself, but who must yet be recognised in his aloofness to be even greater than his works. As it is, the picture is harmonious; but few other literary men of our age could be substituted for that tranquil figure without grotesqueness. Even its pose is not that which we are accustomed to see in illustrated interviews. His was the hidden life, still and dignified in the midst of a vulgar, self-advertising generation. But the goodness that pervaded and animated it cannot be hid; it lives for ever in his writings, and makes them as bracing and wholesome as the breezes that blow, even now as I write, straight from the Atlantic Ocean around the lonely grange of Sker.

E. J. NEWELL.

THE FRENCH ARMY.

[Report made in the name of the Commission of the Budget charged with examining the Appropriation Bill of the General Budget for the year 1900 (Ministry of War), by M. Camille Pelletan.]

THE Reporter of the Commission of the Budget is a Parliamentary personage unknown to us, but very conspicuous among the French. It is the custom of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies in that country to name commissions, or, as we should say, committees, to examine and report upon all bills. Parliament may act upon their advice, or not; very commonly it does not. In the case of the Report on the Army Estimates now before us the Chamber of Deputies has followed the second course.

And yet it is a very weighty document, which aroused many passions, and would have stirred many more if there had not been a general determination in the Chamber of Deputies to stifle its conclusions. The most important of the committees is that of the Budget, and no part of its work is more vital than its examination of the Army Estimates. The committee is carefully selected, can hear witnesses, and call for papers from the Ministries. This year its investigations have been directed, and its finding put into shape, by M. Camille Pelletan, who has had great experience in this work, and has a very happy faculty for lucid statement. It presents us therefore with a comprehensive review of the administration of the funds allotted for the French army which is not only good to read, thanks to M. Pelletan, but has also a very fair chance to be trustworthy. A reading and re-reading of the Report enables one to understand why Nationalist, or other

patriotic deputies were frequently moved to interrupt the Reporter, as he rolled out his statement through two whole days, by cheers for the army. It was much easier to repeat the fashionable version of "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," than to controvert M. Pelletan by argument. Any attempt to act on the evidence he put before the Chamber would speedily have led to a collision with the chiefs of that army which France cannot praise too highly, but which she none the less holds by the ears with fear and trembling.

Two main conclusions are to be drawn from the Report. The first is that there is great waste of the money paid by Frenchmen for the support of their army; the second is that there is great waste of the time of the men drawn for military service. M. Pelletan labours very hard to show that French officers holding the higher commands are much more highly paid than German, Austrian, or Italian military men in similar positions. Yet the sums which he quotes, and appears to consider extravagant, do not seem high to an Englishman. Thus the Governor of Paris has a salary of rather over £2,000 a year. It is more by some £400 than the salary of the Chief of the German General Staff, and yet an Englishman occupying an equivalent post would certainly receive more. The Adjutant-General draws more, and the Commander-in-Chief twice as much. It is true that the Governor of Paris is better paid than a French

Minister, or than any head of a department, and yet the enormity of his emoluments does not strike us. The pay and allowances of his office are even modest according to our standard, and indeed it is not in the amount of individual salaries that we have to look for the explanation of the waste in French military administration. Yet there are two points made by M. Pelletan in this part of his report which are worth noting. It is a commonplace with Nationalist writers, and others who hate the Republic, that it has been wanting in respect for its generals. Yet as a matter of fact no previous form of government among the many which have succeeded one another in France has provided them with so many well-paid posts. The Superior Council of War, an institution imitated by Spain but unknown elsewhere, is a creation of the present Republic. It has provided not a few military gentlemen with easy and, according to the French standard, lucrative billets. Lately its numbers have been much reduced by General de Galliffet on the cruel grounds that many of its members were too old and infirm for work. Yet they were bowed out with compliments, pensions, and decorations. The second point is a curious one. When a comparison is made between the pay of French and German officers of the higher ranks the first have a marked advantage. But as you go down the list equality is established in the middle ranks, and by the time you reach the captains and lieutenants the advantage is seen to be with the Germans, who are unquestionably better paid, and better treated in the matter of travelling and other allowances. This contrast moves M. Pelletan to put the pointed question whether French administrations have always been inspired by those democratic principles which were under-

stood to have been established a century ago.

Still all this part of the Report is rather by the way. It is even an appeal to that envy which is not the most agreeable feature of the French character. The real causes of waste must be sought elsewhere. That it has existed in the past, and was a cause of the disasters of 1870 is a commonplace. M. Pelletan makes short work of a favourite contention of the soldiers, that the French army was found inferior when war came upon it, because the Chambers had grudged money. They voted about twice as much as the Germans, and if their money produced only half as much the fault did not lie with their niggardliness. Since the war they have given whatever they have been asked for. The blood-tax is far heavier in France than elsewhere. Since her population does not increase, and she thinks it necessary to have an army equal in numbers to the German, she has to force a larger percentage into the ranks, and she does. Germany calls to the colours eleven in the thousand of her subjects, Austria eight, and Italy six; Russia draws about as many as Austria; France calls on fourteen in the thousand of her population. Be it observed too that she has to support a larger fleet. Thus the drain on the working part of the race is far more severe on her than on her rivals. The dilemma is indeed a terrible one. France is persuaded that if her military forces by land and sea are not kept at a level with the strongest of her neighbours her very existence is in peril. Yet her population does not increase while the German does. Thus equality can only be secured by her at the cost of weakening herself in the industrial conflict. If she fails there her power to maintain a great army goes. The time is perhaps,

indeed is almost certainly, coming when she will be distanced. For the moment she maintains, or seems to maintain, her place; but if she is to do so even in show there is a peremptory obligation on her to see that neither man's service nor the taxpayers' money is ill spent. M. Pelletan asserts that there is prodigality of both, and he quotes chapter and verse in support of his opinion.

Let us see what he has to say, beginning with the men, and among them with the officers. They indeed supply the best starting-point for, though M. Pelletan does not say it rudely in so many words, it is his obvious contention that some of the worst evils of the French military administration arise from the anxiety of the officers to escape regimental work by obtaining administrative places, and then from the little scruple they have in drawing away men from the ranks to serve as workmen, or as servants to themselves. Of course what the officers wish most of all is to be stationed in Paris. The War-Office has met their wishes liberally. Whereas in the last days of the Empire there were twenty-two or twenty-three military officers in the Rue St. Dominique the number has now risen to two hundred and sixty-seven. It has increased more than tenfold. The soldiers no doubt in many cases only displaced civilian officials, but the net result is none the less that they are withdrawn from service with the troops. There are unquestionably many military men employed in the war-offices of the Triple Alliance, but no one of the Powers composing it allows its administration to be hampered by the multiplicity of councils, committees, inspectorships and schools which exists in France, and draws officers by the hundred from the troops. In addition to the Superior Council of War, there

is a wealth of committees of all arms which annex the services of no less than thirty generals of division, that is to say of rather more than a quarter of the officers of that rank, all of whom are much confined to their desks when they can find anything to do, but who, to a large extent, have to make work partly by going on continual tours of formal inspection for which they draw allowances.

It is a feature of the French army, and a very bad one, that its officers are of different origins, both socially and in training. There is the distinction between those who enter through the great schools, and who are officers from the beginning. Of late years the tendency has been to increase the proportion who enter in this way. The enemies of the aristocratic element in the army, who are many, bitter, and fluent, assert that this is the case because these schools offer the most effectual of all ways of escaping real service as a soldier, with knapsack on back, as the phrase goes; it is one which has a grim meaning when we think of the crushing weight laid on the shoulders of the French infantry soldier. Therefore, say the democratic critics, the sons of moneyed classes swarm into these schools, not because they like military service, but as a means of escaping the barrack. They are pushed on by backstairs influence. Meanwhile everything is done to discourage those officers who reach commissions from the ranks by passing the schools for non-commissioned officers at Saumur and St. Maixent. Here is one cause of sour class-jealousy. A less acid but equally effective cause of want of true comradeship in the French army is the fact that while some of the officers enter from St. Cyr, and they are the most aristocratic in birth, those of the scientific corps come from the Ecole

Politechnique. Rivalry and social distinctions are the consequences.

It is easy to show how this tendency to look upon their own corps as a little world, which stands apart and suffices for itself, leads to waste of money. Some of the examples are comic. For example, a French regiment is allowed to have a printing-press under a strict regulation that not more than two soldiers are to be set apart as compositors or printers. Once in possession of this instrument colonels have hastened to make the most of it. The regulation number of men is habitually exceeded. Sometimes the regimental press works for the trade. Now and then a colonel of literary tastes uses it to publish his own immortal works. This is not perhaps in itself a great matter, but it is the type of much else. "It is," says M. Pelletan, speaking of the numerous manufactories worked by the French Artillery, "one of the most striking, and, we may add, one of the most costly characteristics of our military administration, that each of the corps composing it has a tendency to become a self-contained little world. No army makes less appeal to civil resources, to private industry, or seems to endeavour in so high a degree to confer a military character on all the articles it uses by making them for itself. This feeling which the army has in regard to the rest of France, every corps, every establishment seems to share in regard to the rest of the army." The Artillery, an old and powerful corps, has naturally carried this tendency very far, having had abundance of time and opportunity. It possesses no less than one hundred and fifty-eight different establishments known as Directions, Inspections, Schools, or Workshops. The schools teach nothing, and the inspections inspect nothing. All are

store-houses and manufactories; all as a matter of course provide comfortable billets for military gentlemen who, if not exactly weary of the wars, are tired of the routine of duty with their batteries. At the powder-manufactory of Bouchet, which employs three hundred and fifty-five workmen, there are nine artillery officers proper, or one to every thirty-nine hands, besides "officers of the particular general staff of the artillery" to the number of four. This is quoted as a typical case. If now we multiply nine by forty-eight, if we remember that Bouchet is not one of the larger places, if we allow for the committees, and so forth, which double and repeat every department of the French administration, it is easy to understand that the number of officers seconded, that is, set apart from their batteries to semi-civil and pen-work, is counted by the hundred. The exact total is eight hundred and fifty officers of different ranks out of three thousand and ten. As a matter of course the senior get the pick of the places, and the proportion of majors, colonels, and generals seconded is much larger than that of the captains and lieutenants.

Meanwhile the Engineers have their long list of establishments. And all these places endeavour to do everything. The variety of the articles produced by the Artillery is amazing. It includes carts, harness, bed-room furniture, and bicycles. The same articles are made in different places. That they should all cost more than they would if bought by contract in a business-like way is in accordance with a universal experience. But they cost more in one government establishment than in another. Thus one thousand ball-cartridges cost frs. 94.50 at Puteaux, and frs. 88.90 at Tarbes; and this is only one of many examples. M.

Pelletan roundly accuses many of these places of making work and buying goods so dear in order to get through the money assigned them by Government. He quotes a case in which frs. 6,950 were paid for a planing-machine when an equally good one could have been obtained for frs. 5,000. The excuse was that the dearer instrument could be delivered before the end of the year. "And why so much haste?" asks M. Pelletan. Because if the machine was delivered before the end of the year the price could be put down in the current account, and so use up the vote. The costly planing-machine was in fact bought to avoid the danger that there would be a balance at the end of the year, and that the Ministry of War would make this an excuse for reducing the allotment.

The men employed in these places are not wholly, but are very largely drawn from the ranks. Not only are artillerymen and engineers taken, but drafts are made on infantry regiments for skilled workmen. Of course both are withdrawn from real military training. Add to this that there is a far greater abuse of the right to employ the service of soldier-servants in France than elsewhere. It is not only that officers on active service with the troops have a large number, or even that officers seconded for administrative work have the same privilege. Some who are not employed at all keep their orderlies. In the Artillery and Cavalry a regular staff of drivers and grooms is engaged on the service of the brakes, which are supposed to be employed for military purposes, but are as a matter of fact used for the convenience of the officers, and are driven, cleaned, built, repaired, and horsed at the tax-payers' expense. M. Pelletan declares, proof in hand, that when all these deductions are allowed for

it is often impossible to find more than forty-five men with a battery, or to collect a full company for practice out of a whole battalion. He complains that the War-Office is always asking for more men, in order to swell the nominal strength of the ranks, and that it allows the doctors to pass thousands of unfit conscripts. Indeed of late years the work of medical examination has been shamefully scamped in the French army. Yet he argues that if the War-Office really wants more men in order that companies, troops, and batteries may practise with full ranks, it has only to put a stop to the abuse of withdrawing thousands of soldiers for industrial and domestic work. To this the Chamber has answered with cheers for the army, and has obvious reasons for preferring this course to action. Military gentlemen do not like (no human being likes) interference with their comforts, pay, and allowances. Moreover it is highly probable that the soldiers themselves would a great deal rather work at their trades, or learn one, in a Government factory, or drive a brake, or look after the colonel's baby, and flirt with the colonel's cook, than toil on the parade-ground, under a weight of seventy pounds, or thereabouts.

It must be allowed that M. Pelletan describes a state of things not only calculated to produce waste of labour, and of money, but compatible with fraud. If the rules which forbid the withdrawal of soldiers from due military training are evaded, what may not be done with the tax-payers' money? The question how far pilfering and fraud prevail in the army excites much intelligible passion. Critics of the stamp of M. Urbain Gohlier, and other writers on the *Aurore*, who pay a great deal of attention to the army, assert that downright theft by the superior

officers is rampant. But they are disqualified by their foaming hatred of what they call *Militarism*, and by their avowed belief that in all countries, and in all times, the profession of soldier is of itself enough to turn an honest man into a rogue, and a humane one into a ruffian. Yet that there is fraud in the French military administration is not to be denied. The evil was denounced some four or five years ago by M. Cavaignac, who was then Reporter of the Budget Commission, and who had not yet begun to think that he could obtain the Presidency by posing as an unqualified admirer of the army. M. Pelletan goes further than M. Cavaignac, and we cannot disregard the deliberate statement of a man speaking in the name of a well-informed responsible body. He says that the military administration is conducted in a fashion which favours fraud, and he quotes examples to show both that there is pilfering, and that when it is detected the offenders are screened, while those who try to bring them to justice are subject to persecution.

Two conditions, as explained by M. Pelletan, favour the existence and the spread of dishonesty. One of these is the rooted unwillingness of the authorities to allow of the publication of the fact that anything is wrong in the army. They will punish misbehaviour quietly, but when there is the least risk of publicity they will burke inquiry and screen offenders. After the late notorious history of the Dreyfus Case it is unnecessary to demonstrate by copious examples that the French army holds the Chinese view of honour,—namely that it consists in “saving your face,” by the use of all means, including perjury and forgery. But M. Pelletan quotes some pretty examples of the way in which this professional feeling works. There is

an Accountant-General's department in the French War-Office, and it is supposed to check accounts. Some time ago the books of a regiment unnamed were being examined, and the examining official called for the captain of one company, and was told with some embarrassment that he was “on a mission” in Paris. Inquiry showed that there was gross irregularity, and revealed the truth, which was that he was serving his time in the military prison of Cherche-Midi. Here the authorities had punished the offender in the hope that they would succeed in washing their dirty linen at home. But it sometimes happens that this much-quoted maxim of Napoleon (whose regard for truth is well known) cannot be wholly followed. Then the resource is to deny the existence of any dirty linen. Cases have been known in which officers accused of stealing have been acquitted by court-martial, but have been retired by the Minister of War with orders that the amount which they have just been declared not to have stolen shall be deducted from their half-pay. From this it is a short step to thorough screening of the offender; and that step is taken.

M. Pelletan tells how suspicion was excited that two non-commissioned officers, one employed in an establishment of the Artillery at Vincennes and the other at Versailles, were stealing Government leather. The superior officers, who no doubt considered their own character for vigilance at stake, refused to believe the charge. An examination of the entry and issue books revealed for a time no irregularity, till it appeared that on some occasions the amount given out was in excess of the amount received. The inquiry was pushed home, and the trick discovered. When leather is bought an allowance

is made for the frayed edges of the skins, and this is deducted from the total weight. The confederates had based their calculations on this margin. The Vincennes pilferer stole, and his Versailles friend sold, good leather to the amount of the usual deduction. Then the frayed edge was weighed in when the skins were issued. It was a pretty plot, and would probably have escaped detection if they had not painted their lily a little too much. But the best of the story is the end. It was impossible not to hold a court-martial after discovery. The Versailles non-commissioned officer confessed, and the court acquitted both the prisoners, so resolute was it to defend the honour of the army by not allowing the world to know that any irregularities take place in its ranks. Now it is obvious that if pickers and stealers know that at the worst they will be mildly punished in the bosom of the family, and that when publicity is to be feared they will be acquitted to save the face of the corps, there exists a state of things eminently favourable to fraud.

Here the accusation came from the outside. When it comes from the inside worse things are done. If it is an inferior who brings the charge against one higher in rank than himself and proves it, the offender may be punished, but the accuser is always ruined for "want of respect to his superior." If it is a superior who accuses an inferior his case is not always better. M. Pelletan tells at length the stories of Major Myszkowski and of Colonel Allais. They differ in details, but are identical in essentials. Both were officers of good, and Colonel Allais was of brilliant reputation, both detected subordinate commissioned officers under their command in absolute fraud, both were immediately subject to persecution

by their own superiors, both proved their case, and both were hounded out of the army. It is not suggested that the high authorities who ruined Major Myszkowski and Colonel Allais had any interest in protecting the thieves. They acted as they did under the influence of that Napoleonic, or Jesuitical, doctrine that the sin lies in the scandal. They wanted to save the face of the army, and they were embittered against subordinates who were discrediting it by dragging its offences to light. But be their motives what they may they acted as the effective protectors of fraud. In both cases the guilty officers got off almost with impunity. They certainly suffered a great deal less than the honest men who had detected them. If fraud does not flourish under this stimulus in the French army then the average of human nature in France must be very high.

Another condition which M. Pelletan notes as leading to waste, and encouraging dishonesty is created by the system of what is called *the mass*. Each portion of the French army has its lump sum with which to pay its expenses. A certain discretion is allowed to the commander as to the division of this money. The theory is that self-interest will lead him to make the most of it, and that the general control will prevent waste or dishonesty. It is a plausible theory, but if it is to be made good in action, the money must always be spent in a business-like way, and the control must be constant and effective. This check, however, is not properly applied. The inspection of the accounts of regiments takes place only at intervals of as much as three years, and it has to be conducted in the face of that jealousy which every French corps shows to all authority outside its own borders. As for the

spending of the money M. Pelletan tells some astounding stories of the folly shown. A general commanding a brigade invents a new button, and recommends it to the regiments under his command. They may not be bound to take it, but respect for superiors makes it impossible to disregard the general's invention. So the buttons are bought out of the mass. One general officer informed his division that "a sentry-box carefully adorned is the jewel-case of the soldier." He also told them that when horses see their stablemen "shivering and in rags" those noble animals "are filled with fear, cannot repose, perish, and rightly curse the number of their regiment." Of course the result was a brisk outlay of money on paint, fires, and clothes for the stablemen. The expense of these inventions and fancies has to be met out of the mass. If the paymaster objects that it cannot be done, he is told to wriggle out of it. There is nothing for it but to lay the head of the sow to the tail of the grice, as Dalgetty would have said, that is to say, to starve some parts of the service in order to comply with the fancies of the commanding officer. But except in the case of the cavalry regiments which have more generous allotments, the allowance is narrowly calculated. Hence most of the infantry regiments and artillery batteries get into debt and form what are known in France as *black masses*. They are compelled to have recourse to the Minister of War, and to grants in aid. Help is never refused, and the extra sums which have gone in this way amount to nearly twenty millions of francs in six years. Well-managed regiments have even been made to pay for the extravagant ones. Thus not very long ago the clothing hitherto kept in a central storehouse was divided among the regiments *pro rata*.

In reality the regiments were only receiving their own property, but the War Minister ordered them to refund the value of the clothes. The well-managed corps did so, and the money was employed by the Minister in liquidating the black masses of those which were indebted. And now, in such a general prevalence of ill-kept accounts, and under the protection of military unwillingness to publish scandals by punishing offenders, must there not be much room for that licking of the fingers which Dalgetty indulged in what time he was in command of "the whole shift of Dunklespiel on the Lower Rhine"? Clearly there is.

No doubt can exist that the management of the French army is extravagant in one respect. It everywhere pays more for its food than the market-price. On every business principle this is unpardonable, for it buys wholesale and offers a sure custom. Therefore it ought to get its supplies cheap. M. Pelletan explains why it does not. Under pretence of protecting itself against the tricks of contractors the State has framed an immense and complicated code of regulations. They are full of pitfalls for the unwary trader, and cause endless delays in payment. Moreover the law makes the State judge in its own case, so that a trader has little or no chance of fair dealing. The result is that the farmer or tradesman shrinks from dealing with the army at all, and there has grown up a whole class of middlemen who make a special business of supplying military contracts. The result is the greater price paid by the army for its supplies. The middleman buys at, or below the market-rate, and then puts on something for his profit. For him the regulations which are so formidable to the plain farmer or trader have

no terrors. He slips through them with ease, and the most intimate relations exist between him and Government officials. The prevalence of fraud in these transactions is undeniable. In spite of the constant effort to suppress the truth, cases do occur in which some dishonest transaction becomes public. Generally the cause of the revelation is the refusal of some Government examiner to pass bad stores. When the matter is reluctantly looked into it is usually found that somebody in the Commissariat is in league with a contractor. M. Pelletan asserts that the delinquent is hardly ever punished. The worst that happens to him is that he is sent to another district. Sometimes he appears later on as promoted or decorated with the Legion of Honour. The tolerance of the State with established abuses is almost boundless. It is part of the general laxity that in some regiments the mass is helped out by a very mean trick. When a soldier in a French regiment is given leave from Saturday to Monday he loses one day's pay and rations. The amount ought to be deducted from the expenses of the regiment and to go to the credit of the State. In some regiments it appears that this leave is never given; yet as a matter of fact soldiers do go out. What happens is that they are allowed formally to go out only on Sunday, but are told by the sergeant-major that they may leave on Saturday night and may return at any time they like before Monday morning. In point of fact they do

get their Saturday to Monday, though in theory no such leave is granted. Do they also get the money? M. Pelletan refuses to believe it, and most people will share his scepticism. The deductions are made and put into the mass, instead of being refunded as they ought to be.

M. Pelletan's report covers two hundred and twenty large quarto pages, and contains much more than can be quoted here. But enough has perhaps be said to show its general drift, and also to enable English readers to understand the grounds on which hostile critics assert that the French War-Office is a sink of corruption, that the tax-payers' money is wasted, and that the cause of the evil is the self-seeking of officers, or even their collusion with peculators. These assailants are too passionate, too abusive to inspire confidence. And yet it is impossible not to agree that there is much to arouse suspicion in this carefully drawn up and temperately worded report of M. Pelletan. Granted the constant effort to stifle inquiry, granted the frequent occurrence of scandals too rank to be concealed, granted such tell-tale facts as the shocking mismanagement which cost the lives of seven thousand poor fellows in Madagascar, granted proved extravagance where no fraud is suspected, and is it unfair to suggest a doubt whether, if it were put to the test, the French army would prove much more sound to-day than it proved in 1870?

DAVID HANNAY.

THE CURRENT COIN OF POLITICIANS.

It is interesting and instructive to trace the origin of our party nomenclature and of those effective and picturesque phrases and familiar colloquial expressions which are the common property, or the current coin, of all politicians. Most of these striking sayings are associated with the names of eminent statesmen. Indeed it is one of the ironies of parliamentary history that the memory of many a politician, distinguished and powerful in his day, lives mainly in his phrases. In some instances the sayings, or catch-words, were really coined by the speakers who first contributed them to our political currency; but in other cases they were not so much original expressions, as apt quotations from obscure sources so strikingly applied as to fire the popular imagination. Take, for example, the phrase "a leap in the dark" so finely used by Lord Derby in reference to the bill which in 1867 established household suffrage in boroughs. When Lord Derby was Premier of a Conservative Government for the third and last time, this measure was introduced by his own Administration, but he gave it only a half-hearted support. "No doubt," said he, on the third reading of the bill in the House of Lords, "no doubt we are making a great experiment and taking a leap in the dark, but I have the greatest confidence in the sound sense of my countrymen." The phrase was used eight years before by Lord Palmerston, in a private letter to Lord John Russell under, curiously enough, somewhat similar circumstances. Lord John

had in contemplation certain proposals for electoral reform which included a £10 county franchise. "As to our county franchise," wrote Lord Palmerston, "we seem to be taking a leap in the dark." But we hear of the phrase having been used two hundred years earlier. Thomas Hobbes, the political writer of the seventeenth century, is reported to have said on his death-bed, "I am taking a frightful leap in the dark." "Meddle and Muddle," one of the most expressive terms in our political currency, which is also associated with the name of Lord Derby, was really coined by that statesman. In 1865 Lord John Russell (or rather Earl Russell for he was then a peer) was Premier and Foreign Secretary. He claimed that the policy of the Liberal Government in foreign affairs was a policy of non-intervention. "The foreign policy of the noble earl, so far as the principle of non-intervention is concerned, may be summed up," said Lord Derby, "in two short, homely, but expressive words,—*meddle and muddle*."

"Cave," the designation of a discontented section of a party which breaks away from its allegiance, arose out of a humorous sally made by Mr. John Bright during the debates on Mr. Gladstone's abortive Reform Bill of 1866. The measure was opposed by a strong party of Liberals, including Mr. Horsman. "The Right Honourable gentleman," said Mr. Bright, in the course of a speech in the House of Commons, "is the first of a new party who has expressed his great grief, who has retired into what may be called his

political Cave of Adullam, and he has called about him everyone who is in distress, and everyone who is discontented." The phrase caught the popular fancy, and was accepted by the malcontents. "No improper motive," said Lord Elcho (now Lord Wemyss), "has driven us into this cave, where we are a most happy family, daily—I may say hourly—increasing in number and strength, where we shall remain until we go forth to deliver Israel from oppression." The bill was defeated and the Government resigned, only to be replaced by Lord Derby's Administration which passed the Household Suffrage Act. "The Ministry," said Lord Granville in the House of Lords, referring to that Administration, "have dished the Whigs," thereby making an important contribution to our political phraseology; and Mr. Robert Lowe (subsequently Lord Sherbrooke) who had joined Mr. Horsman in the Cave of Adullam, invented the happy phrase, "We must now, at least, educate our Masters" (*à-propos* of the new electorate) in a speech expressive of his amazement at this surrender of the Conservative Government on the question of Reform.

"The greatest happiness of the greatest number" first appeared (according to Jeremy Bentham, in his *LIBERTY OF THE PEOPLE*) in one of the innumerable pamphlets written by Dr. Joseph Priestley, in reply to Edmund Burke's *REFLECTIONS ON THE FRENCH REVOLUTION*. "He rose like a rocket and fell like the stick," was first used by Tom Paine, the notorious Republican writer, in reference to Burke. "One half the world knows not how the other lives" will be found in *HOLY OBSERVATIONS* by Doctor Joseph Hall, Bishop of Exeter and of Norwich in the seventeenth century. "The Majesty of the people"

was coined by Charles Fox. In 1798 a political dinner was given at the Crown and Anchor tavern in celebration of Fox's birthday, with the Duke of Norfolk in the chair. Concluding his speech in reply to the toast of his health, the great Whig leader said: "Give me leave, before I sit down, to call on you to drink our Sovereign's health,—the Majesty of the People." For this sentiment Fox was deprived of two offices he held under the Crown, the Lord Lieutenancy of the West Riding of Yorkshire and the command of a Militia regiment, and was also struck off the list of the Privy Council. Carlyle, on the other hand, thought the people were "mostly fools." It has been stated that this declaration occurs in Carlyle's appeal (printed in *THE SPECTATOR*) to Lord John Russell, then Premier, to do something for the industrial improvement of Ireland. In that appeal, Carlyle merely speaks of his countrymen as "twenty-seven millions, many of whom are fools;" but in the *LATTER-DAY PAMPHLETS* in the chapter on Parliament he says:

Consider in fact, a body of six hundred and fifty-eight miscellaneous persons set to consult about business, with twenty-seven millions, mostly fools, assiduously listening to them, and checking and criticising them,—was there ever since the world began, will there ever be till the world ends, any business accomplished in these circumstances?

It is plain that it was from the latter, and not from the former, passage that the celebrated phrase came into popular use.

Among the political sayings, for which we are indebted to Disraeli are—"Reaction is the consequence of a nation waking from its illusions" (1848),—"A *tu quoque* should always be good-humoured for it has nothing else to recommend it" (1855),—"Finality is not the language of politics" (1859),—"To assist progress,

to resist revolution is the policy of the Conservative party" (1859),—"Party is organised opinion" (1864). "England does not love coalitions" is another saying of that great political phrase-maker. On that night in 1852 when Lord Derby's first Ministry, in which Disraeli filled the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, was defeated on an amendment by Gladstone to the Budget,—an amendment which united Whigs, Radicals, and Peelites—Disraeli, in a defiant speech before the fatal division, said: "I know that I have to face a coalition. The combination may be successful,—combination has before this been successful—but coalitions, though they may be successful, have always found that their triumphs have been brief. This I know, that England does not love coalitions." That particular coalition under Lord Aberdeen and Lord John Russell was certainly not successful. "There is one indisputable element of a Coalition Government," said Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, "and that is that its members should coalesce." In this case they drifted widely apart.

But Disraeli's most popular phrase was "Peace with Honour." The occasion on which the words were used is well known. On the return of the two British plenipotentiaries at the Berlin Congress in 1878, Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury, an enthusiastic reception was given them in London; and speaking on July 16th the former said: "Lord Salisbury and myself have brought you back peace, but peace I hope with honour, which may satisfy our Sovereign and tend to the welfare of the country." The phrase, however, like so many of his epigrammatic utterances, was not Lord Beaconsfield's own invention. It had been used before by two eminent statesmen, but it was Lord Beaconsfield's fine and apt application of it on a dramatic occasion that fixed it

for ever on the public memory and made it a current coin of every-day political speech and writing. Lord John Russell, in the course of a speech at Dundee in 1865, said, "As Secretary for Foreign Affairs it has been my object to preserve peace with honour." The phrase is also to be found in one of the best known of Burke's speeches,—that imperishable oration on Conciliation with America delivered in the House of Commons March 22nd, 1775. "Great and acknowledged force," he said, "is not impaired either in effect or in opinion by an unwillingness to exert itself. The superior force may offer peace with honour, and with safety." Yet it is to poetry and not to politics that we are really indebted for the phrase. Shakespeare uses it in *CORIOLANUS*, iii. 2 :

If it be honour in your wars to seem
The same you are not, which, for your
best ends,
You adopt your policy, how is it less,
or worse,
That it shall hold companionship in
peace
With honour, as in war, since that to
both
It stands in like request ?

An amusing story is told in connection with the phrase. In the course of a political lecture, illustrated with a magic-lantern, in a country village, portraits of Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury, with the words *Peace with Honour* were thrown upon the screen. An old lady among the audience, whose head was full of recollections of a notorious criminal, innocently inquired amid great laughter, "Which is Peace ?"

"Every man has his price:" this cynical saying is generally ascribed to Sir Robert Walpole; "yet," writes Mr. John Morley, "he never delivered himself of that famous slander on mankind." One night in the House

of Commons he insisted that self-interest, or family-interest, was at the bottom of the fine and virtuous declamation of the Opposition: "All these men," he said, "have their price." It was, therefore, not a general, but a political proposition. "Mend it, or end it," was used by Mr. John Morley in reference to the House of Lords, in a speech made at St. James's Hall on July 30th, 1884. Mr. Morley was much praised by the Radical newspapers for his happy jingle. They did not know, though we may be sure so staunch a lover of good literature as Mr. Morley did not forget, that the speaker was only borrowing a phrase from Sir Walter. "My fate calls me elsewhere," says Halbert Glendenning in *THE MONASTERY*, "to scenes where I shall end it or mend it." "Property has its duties as well as its rights" first appeared in a public letter addressed by Thomas Drummond, Under Secretary for Ireland in the Melbourne Administration, to the Tipperary landlords in 1838, in reply to their application to the Government for the aid of the military in the collection of their rents. One of the most quoted of all sayings, "The schoolmaster is abroad," we owe to Brougham. In a speech on education delivered in 1820 he used the following eloquent passage: "Let the soldier be abroad if he will; he can do nothing in this age. There is another personage abroad, a person less imposing, in the eyes of some, perhaps insignificant. The schoolmaster is abroad, and I trust to him, armed with his primer, against the soldier in full military array." Brougham was also the originator of the phrase, "The pursuit of knowledge under difficulties." "A revolution by due course of law" was Wellington's happy description of the Reform Act of 1832. "I'll un-Whig that gentleman" is one of Pitt's

sayings. During the mental incapacity of George the Third the Whigs maintained that the Prince of Wales had the absolute right to assume the Regency, having every reason to believe that one of his earliest actions in the exercise of the royal prerogative would be the substitution of a Whig for a Tory Administration. When Fox propounded in the House of Commons this theory which, to say the least, was not quite in accord with Whig principles, Pitt slapped his thigh triumphantly and turning to a colleague who sat beside him on the Treasury Bench he exclaimed, "I'll un-Whig the gentleman for the rest of his life." In recent years, Sir William Harcourt used the phrase in the House of Commons in reference to a prominent Liberal Unionist. He was comically made by one reporter to say, "I'll unwig the gentleman for the rest of his life." Sir Francis Burdett began his fifty years of Parliamentary life as a Radical and ended it as a Conservative. In the course of an attack which he made on a bill of the Liberal Government in his Conservative days, he stigmatised "the cant of patriotism;" the phrase was happy, but it left its author, the whilom patriot, open to as clever a retort as the House of Commons has ever heard. "There is something worse than the cant of patriotism," said Lord John Russell in reply, "and that is the recant of patriotism." The readiness of the retort, and its personal appositeness greatly excited the House, which rang with cheers and laughter for several minutes. Mr. Gladstone is said to have declared that no cleverer retort than this was ever made.

Mr. Gladstone himself has enriched our political colloquialisms with such useful and striking phrases as "The flowing tide is with us," "Political economy is banished to Saturn," "It advances by leaps and

bounds," "Within measurable distance," "Within the range of practical politics," "Our friends across the seas," "The ringing of the Chapel bell" (a rather unfortunate reference to the attempt of the Fenians to blow up Clerkenwell prison), and "a Nation rightly struggling to be free" (applied, strange to say, to the Mad-hists). His also was the happy phrase "Greater freedom and less responsibility." On being called to account in the Parliament of 1880-85 for some uncomplimentary expressions he had used towards Austria before he came into office, he pleaded in extenuation that when he uttered the words he occupied "a position of greater freedom and less responsibility." The famous watchword "the Masses against the Classes" was first uttered by Gladstone in a speech at Liverpool on June 28th, 1896. "I will venture to say," he cried, "that upon one great class of subjects, the largest and most weighty of all, when the determining considerations that ought to lead to a conclusion are truth, justice, and humanity,—upon these, gentlemen, all the world over, I will back the Masses against the Classes." The celebrated phrase "an old Parliamentary Hand" was happily applied by Mr. Gladstone to himself in the House of Commons, January 22nd, 1886, on the opening of a new Parliament. "I stand here," he said, "as a member of the House where there are many who have taken their seats for the first time upon these benches, and where there may be some to whom, possibly, I may avail myself of the privilege of old age to offer a recommendation. I would tell them of my own intention to keep my counsel and reserve my own freedom, until I see the occasion when there may be a prospect of public benefit in endeavouring to make a movement forward, and I will venture to recommend them, as an old Parlia-

mentary hand, to do the same." The authorship of "bag and baggage" has also been imputed to Mr. Gladstone. But with him, in this case, it was simply the apt application of an old phrase, expressing what his followers wanted to express, with the utmost force and in a way that everybody could understand. He called for the expulsion from Europe of the official Turk "bag and baggage," thus giving the phrase an extensive currency in the world of politics. The phrase has, however, been in existence for ages. Touchstone, for instance, says to Corin (*As You Like It*, iii. 2): "Come, shepherd, let us make an honourable retreat; though not with bag and baggage, yet with scrip and scrippage." The description of Turkey as the Sick Man was first used by the Emperor Nicholas of Russia when discussing Turkish affairs in January, 1853, with Sir Hamilton Seymour, the English ambassador. "We have on our hands," said Nicholas, "a sick man, a very sick man; it will be, I tell you frankly, a great misfortune if one of these days he should slip away from us, especially before all necessary arrangements are made." But perhaps the most striking phrase coined in this connection is Carlyle's "unspeakable Turk."

"I may say that I have myself been credited with the invention of the phrase 'Home-Rule,'" writes the Honble. George Brodrick (Warden of Merton College) in his *MEMORIES AND IMPRESSIONS*: "nor is it easy to find authority for it earlier than an article of mine speaking of a 'Home-Rule Party' which appeared in *THE TIMES* on February 9th, 1871, and another article of mine on the past and future relations of Ireland to Great Britain which appeared in *MACMILLAN'S MAGAZINE* for the following May." Mr. Brodrick, however, does not believe that he coined the phrase, the context of the aforesaid articles showing

indeed that he was using a term "almost current" at the time. The phrase has also been attributed to Isaac Butt. It really owes its origin to the Reverend Joseph Allen Galbraith, a distinguished Fellow of Trinity College, and Professor in the University of Dublin, who was, with Butt, one of the founders of the Irish Home Government association in 1871. Mr. Galbraith used the words at a meeting of that association in Wicklow Street, Dublin, for the first time in 1870. Butt, in a speech at the Home Rule Conference in Dublin, in November, 1873, referred to the expression in terms which show that he had no claim to be its inventor. "Over a torn and distracted country," he said, "a country agitated with dissension, weakened by distrust, is raised the banner on which were emblazoned the magic words *Home-Rule*. Wherever the legend we had emblazoned in its folds was seen, the heart of the people moved to its words, and the soul of the nation felt their power and their spell." It is curious that the phrase has now become the accepted description of autonomy all over the world. "Found salvation" was used by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman as a humorous explanation of his adoption of Mr. Gladstone's Home-Rule policy in 1885, on being offered the post of Secretary for War. He is also the author of the happy term *Ulsteria* as a description of the Orange demonstrations against Home-Rule in the North of Ireland. The term "Nonconformist Conscience" was first used in the letter of "A Wesleyan Minister" to *THE TIMES* on November 28th, 1890, demanding the unconditional abdication of Mr. Parnell, and his immediate retirement from Parliamentary life. "Nothing less will satisfy the Nonconformist Conscience now," said the writer. *THE TIMES* in

the same issue referred in its leading columns to "what a correspondent calls the Nonconformist Conscience," and afterwards repeated the phrase on many occasions. Other papers followed suit, and the expression soon passed into the list of current political colloquialisms. Another useful phrase, arising out of the Irish Controversy, is the "Killing Home-Rule by kindness" of Mr. Gerald Balfour. Daniel O'Connell used to boast that he would "drive a coach and six through any Act of Parliament." The origin of the phrase is in the *MEMOIRS OF IRELAND*, published anonymously in 1718, but commonly attributed to Oldmixon. In speaking of Stephen Rice, who was made Chief Baron of the Irish Exchequer by James the Second in 1686, and was removed by William in 1690, Oldmixon says: "He distinguished himself by his inveteracy against the Protestant interest and the settlement of Ireland, having been often heard to say, before he was judge, that he would drive a coach and six horses through the Act of Settlement." Popular agitation which was happily described by Peel,—the first English statesman to yield to its pressure—as "the marshalling of the conscience of a nation to mould its laws," was the invention of O'Connell; and here are three sayings of the great Irish tribune which contain practically his whole political philosophy as a constitutional agitator: "Nothing is politically right which is morally wrong," "He who commits a crime gives strength to the enemy," "No political reform is worth a drop of human blood." "Repeal the Union! Restore the Heptarchy as soon!" exclaimed George Canning in the House of Commons in 1812 during a speech supporting Catholic Emancipation.

The evolution of the word *Jingoism*, to express strong warlike feelings or ultra-patriotic sentiments, for which

Chauvinism does duty in France, is in these times peculiarly interesting. The popular derivation, of course, is from a couplet in a song which was a great favourite at the music-halls in 1877, when some trouble seemed likely to arise with Russia over her war with Turkey.

We don't want to fight, but by Jingo,
if we do,
We have the men, we have the ships,
we have the money too.

But according to an explanation in THE TIMES, which appeared while this song was in vogue, *Jingo* was a direct descendant of the Persian *Jang* meaning war, and the phrase "By Jingo" an equivalent for "By Mars." According to that erudite poet Thomas Ingoldsby, *Jingo* is no more than a popular corruption of the name of the worthy saint Gengulphus; but I have also seen it explained as the Basuto for evil. The first political use of the phrase, however, was in a letter, with the heading *The Jingoies in the Park*, written by Mr. George Jacob Holyoake and published in THE DAILY NEWS of March 13th, 1878, while the word *Jingoism* figured in a leading article in the same journal in 1879.

It was George Canning, of course, who as Foreign Secretary in the Liverpool Administration by recognising the South American republics "called in the New World to redress the balance of the Old," and likewise, of course,—though the conjunction may appear strange—"three acres and a cow," the Radical panacea for the labour difficulty in agricultural districts, belongs to Mr. Jesse Collings. But the origin of "Defence not Defiance" is not so well known. It was first suggested as the motto of the Manchester Volunteers in 1860 by Mr. John Marsh, a local journalist, and a member of the corps. At this time there was much jealousy

in France at the existence of the Volunteers in England, but the Emperor Napoleon, in a speech on military questions soon afterwards, said: "We cannot find fault with a nation which has enrolled her citizens for defence, not defiance." The National Rifle Association afterwards adopted the motto. "Peace, Retrenchment, and Reform" is the motto of the Cobden Club. "Peace and Reform" was the old Liberal watchword, and to it Joseph Hume, the celebrated economist, added the middle word *retrenchment*. It was Mr. John Bright who used the expression, "The great bulk of the Nation do not live in mansions, they live in cottages." The phrase "masterly inactivity," expressive of so much prudence and caution and advantageous inertness in political affairs, was coined by Sir James Mackintosh. "It is the duty of the Opposition to oppose," said Lord Randolph Churchill some twenty years ago; but sixty years before Lord Randolph, Tierney, the Whig leader, had said: "The duty of an Opposition is threefold, always to oppose, never to propose, and to turn out the Government,"—an excellent piece of advice, indeed, for the political party which finds itself on the left of Mr. Speaker.

"Red Tape," as a description of Departmental pedantry and delay, was brought into circulation by Dickens. It was suggested to him, of course, by the red tape used in tying up packages in Government offices. In LITTLE DORRIT, published in 1855, Dickens refers to the "form-filling, corresponding, minuting, memorandum-making, signing, counter-signing, counter-counter-signing backwards and forwards, and referring sideways, crosswise and zig-zag" business done by the Circumlocution Office. As a result of this "an ingenious gentleman connected

with the Department" made the remarkable discovery that "the sheets of foolscap it had devoted to the public service would pave the footways on both sides of Oxford Street from end to end and leave nearly a quarter of a mile to spare for the Park (immense cheering and laughter) while of tape,—red tape—it had used enough to stretch in graceful festoons from Hyde Park Corner to the General Post-Office." This mention of red tape at the time of a Commission of Inquiry into the mismanagement of the Crimean War immortalised the phrase. Carlyle's description of Government officials, as "doleful creatures in a jungle of red tape, deaf or nearly so to human reason," is well-known. "Iron-bound in red tape" was an Irish member's description of the condition of the Chief Secretary. "Platform," as a description of the programme of a party or of a candidate, is often thought to be American, but it is really of very ancient and highly respectable English origin. It is a revival of the old verb, *platformed*, meaning to *lay down principles*. Milton in his controversial work, *REASON OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT*, says that some people, "Do not think it for the ease of their inconsequent opinions to grant that Church Discipline is platformed in the Bible."

"The policy of pin-pricks" is the most expressive and useful phrase that has for a long time been added to our political currency. It arose out of the recent difference between France and England, and had a French origin. Mr. Chamberlain first drew attention to it in this country in a speech at Manchester on November 10th, 1898. He said: "Let me read you one short extract from *LE MATIN*, a French paper published in Paris. They say: 'We [the French] have inaugurated

the policy of playing tricks on Great Britain,—a policy which had no definite object, and which was bound to turn out badly. We now find ourselves confronted by a people who have at last been exasperated by the continual pin-pricks which we have given them.' I venture to say that that is absolutely true." The article in *LE MATIN*, which was unsigned, appeared on November 8th. "The policy of pin-pricks" has since been frequently used in the newspapers and by speakers on public platforms, and is, indeed, a striking contribution to the common stock of our political phrases.

Coming to party names, we find that most of them were originally terms of derision or abuse. "Whig" and "Tory," which for generations have been proudly borne by the two great and permanent political parties in the State, were at first contemptuous nicknames. "Tory" was first applied, according to Macaulay, to those who "refused to concur in excluding James the Second from the throne." It was the most opprobrious term which Titus Oates could apply to the disbelievers in his Popish Plot. But there had been an earlier application of it as a description of the Irish who remained faithful to the Stuarts during the Commonwealth. It is derived from the Gaelic words, *Tar a Ri*, meaning, "Come, oh King!" and was constantly in the mouths of the Irish Loyalists; but in the years following the Revolution bands of outlaws who had fought for James, and were at large among the mountains, were called Rapparees or Tories, and hence the term was imported to England as a nickname for the adherents of the Stuarts. To return the compliment, the Tories borrowed another Gaelic word, "Whig," used in Scotland to describe, first, horse and cattle thieves, secondly, the adherents

of the Presbyterian cause in the middle of the seventeenth century, and bestowed it upon their opponents. Gilbert Burnet, Bishop of Salisbury, the Whig politician and historian, writing of the period after the Revolution, says in reference to the term: "From Scotland the word was brought into England, where it is now one of our unhappy terms of disunion;" and Swift in 1725 wrote: "There is hardly a Whig in Ireland who would allow a potato and butter-milk to a reputed Tory," which could hardly be exceeded as a description of strong partisan feeling.

Some years ago a controversy rose in the newspapers as to the meaning of "Whig," and other ingenious derivations were suggested. One was that it was a Scottish term equivalent to our "whey," and implied a taunt against the "sour-milk faces" of the Western lowlanders. Another writer derived it from the initials of the motto of the Scottish Covenanters, "We hope in God;" but dealing with the latter suggestion a Tory paper unkindly asserted that the motto of the Whig party was, "We believe in gold." According to Gilbert Burnet it was derived from a cant word *whiggam* used by the Scotch peasants in driving their horses.

During the negotiations in 1852 between Lord John Russell and the moderate Whigs and Lord Aberdeen and the Peelites for the formation of a Coalition administration,—that coalition which Disraeli prophesied England would not love—interesting letters passed between the negotiators on the subject of the name by which the new party was to be known. Lord John Russell thought the word Whig would best convey the principles of the word coalition; but the Duke of Newcastle, a supporter of Aberdeen, insisted that Whig was impossible, and must be discarded.

Lord Aberdeen then wrote the following letter to Lord John Russell.

Haddo House, 16th Sept., 1852.

MY DEAR LORD JOHN,

It was no doubt rather a strong proceeding on the part of the Duke of Newcastle to suggest to you, of all men, the propriety and expediency of sinking the title Whig. It is true that neither he nor I have the least desire or intention of assuming the appellation; but I presume that you would never think of acting with us unless you were persuaded that our views were Liberal; and assuredly in any connection with you we should not be prepared to abandon a Conservative policy. Although the term may appear a little contradictory, I believe that "Conservative progress" best describes the principles which ought practically to influence the conduct of any Government of the present day. This was Peel's policy and I think, will continue that of all his friends. For one, looking at the actual state of affairs, I have no objection that the progress should be somewhat more rapid than perhaps he ever intended.

Ever most sincerely yours,
ABERDEEN.

Lord John Russell, as may be imagined, stood up for that blessed word Whig. "The term Whig," he wrote, "has the convenience of expressing in one syllable what Conservative Liberal expresses in seven, and Whiggism in two syllables means what Conservative Progress means in another six." The Coalition Administration was formed, and was soon too engrossed in the management or mismanagement of the Crimean War to trouble itself about a suitable political designation.

There is no longer, as we know, either a Whig party or a Tory party; but undoubtedly there are still Whigs and Tories, for the political principles expressed by these terms survive in individuals who diminish in number as time progresses. Conservative was first suggested by Croker in an article in THE QUAR-

TERLY REVIEW, January, 1830, as a more appropriate party name than Tory. "Conservative," said O'Connell in the House of Commons in 1832, "that is the fashionable term, the new fangled phrase now used in polite society to designate Tory ascendancy." The term was disliked by Disraeli who fought hard for the retention of the older name, and to the last called himself a Tory. In CONINGSBY, published in 1844, occurs this sentence: "'A sound Conservative Government,' said Taper musingly. 'I understand—Tory men and Whig measures.'" But the designation caught the fancy of the bulk of the party, and in time Tory came to be used only in its original sense as a contemptuous nickname by the party's opponents. Whig shared the same fate. Liberal, which like Conservative is broad and vague, and at the same time catching, may be said to have been finally adopted by the Whigs when Mr. Gladstone became leader. "One of the most beautiful and powerful words in the English language" is Lord Rosebery's description of it. Liberal and Conservative are certainly happy and expressive terms; but unlike Whig and Tory they are not exclusively applicable as party denominations.

Constitutionalist was at one time suggested as an appropriate name for the Tory party; but it did not find favour. Reformer, once a favourite term with a wing of the Whig party, has long gone out of fashion. But Radical, which was first applied about 1818 to Major Cartwright, Sir Francis Burdett, Henry Hunt and others who advocated a radical reform of Parliament, has still a strong hold on the advanced Liberals. Tory Democrat, —an invention of Lord Randolph Churchill—is heard of no more. Peelite and Gladstonian we have known; but of course personal names for parties, such as these, cannot hold a place for long. Nationalist, which under the leadership of Mr. Parnell was substituted for Home-Ruler, seems likely to be more enduring; so also perhaps is Liberal Unionist,—the designation, of course, of those Liberals who ceded from Gladstone on the question of Home-Rule—and it would now seem as if the rival party names Imperialist and Little Englander, which have been waxing and waning in popular use for some time, will take a permanent place in political controversy.

MICHAEL MACDONAGH.

BOARDERS AWAY!

SINCE the publication of Captain Mahan's books on the Influence of Sea-Power we have been constantly reminded, by friends and foes alike, that the British Empire (upon which the sun never sets) was created and is maintained by sea-power, and by sea-power alone. The average Briton cordially accepts the statement without troubling himself to enquire into details; and he therefore takes a warm but platonic interest in the Navy, whose history he believes to be glorious, although he is not usually acquainted with it. Perhaps it is this general interest in a subject imperfectly understood which has given birth to the numerous family of naval myths and legends, some of which have been repeated so often that they have been mistaken for history by writers who should have known better. The stories of this Naval Apocrypha are usually orthodox in the spirit, but heterodox in the letter; and among its most generally accepted traditions is the Boarding-Myth.

There are critics who discourage attempts at accuracy of historical detail, as inartistic and pedantical, on the ground that absolute accuracy is impossible, and anything less must be misleading. A large and picturesque generalisation is their ideal method. Generalisation in history is like impressionism in art, admirable when it is the result of ripe knowledge and nice discrimination between that which is vital and that which is accessory; but it is less admirable when vagueness of outline hides faulty drawing and ignorance of form. It may be pedantical to

attach importance to the lesser details of the tactics of those seamen who laid the foundations of the empire; but if it will add to our knowledge of the men to whom we owe so great a debt, let us be pedantical.

Brave Broke he waved his sword,
Crying "Now my lads, aboard!
And we'll stop their crying 'Yankee
Doodle Dandy, oh!"

That famous old song commemorates a very rare exception, an exception so celebrated that it is often mistaken for the rule itself; that rule, if we are to put any faith in naval records, was, that the British sailor never boarded unless he found his gunnery ineffective or his ship unmanageable.

The boarding-pike was an extremely useful weapon in the days of Edward the Third, when the usual method of sea-fighting was to collide as violently as possible with the enemy's ship, grapple her, and fight it out up and down her decks. But when ships began to carry guns, and sailors learned how to use them, the pike and cutlass were subordinated to the great gun. Away from his gun the sailor could do excellent work with any weapon that came handy, the cutlass for choice: he loved a rough-and-tumble fight; but however sorely he might be tempted, his officers rarely allowed him to abandon the scientific accuracy of artillery-fire in order to indulge in the wild dissipation of the cutlass.

Not long ago a popular writer on nautical matters expressed, in one of the magazines, an earnest wish to see the boarding-pike in Jack's hands

again, and denounced another naval expert, who had asserted that there was no instance on record of a line-of-battle ship having been taken by boarding; accusing him of gross ignorance of the fact that Nelson captured two such ships in that fashion at the battle of St. Vincent. This is a belief which is very generally held, but, like many popular beliefs, it rests on a frail foundation of fact. One of those ships would have been captured whether Nelson boarded her or no; and the other had surrendered already.

The details of a fleet-action, in which a number of ships are constantly in motion at different speeds and in varying directions, can never be accurately recorded. There was more than average confusion at St. Vincent; but this at least is tolerably certain. Nelson in the CAPTAIN had been in hot action with the 80-gun ship SAN NICOLAS. About three o'clock in the afternoon Collingwood, in the EXCELLENT, compelled the SAN YSIDRO to haul down her colours, and then stood on, in obedience to signals from the PRINCE GEORGE and VICTORY, without waiting to take possession. Passing between the CAPTAIN and the SAN NICOLAS, he smashed his broadside into the Spaniard at ten feet distance. The signal to stand on after the enemy's ships ahead still flying, the EXCELLENT, BLENHEIM, CULLODEN, and others swept on without waiting to board beaten ships; but the CAPTAIN, with her foretop-mast gone and her rigging cut to pieces, was unable to follow them. Nelson had made the glory of the day his own when he wore out of the line without orders earlier in the action, and threw the CAPTAIN across the path of the Spanish Admiral, cutting him off from his lee division. His work was done; but he could not rest while any chance of distinction re-

mained to be grasped. He fired his larboard broadside into the SAN NICOLAS, which was still being cannonaded by the PRINCE GEORGE, and then ran the CAPTAIN right on board of her. She was, to all intents and purposes, a beaten ship, torn by the fire of the EXCELLENT, PRINCE GEORGE, BLENHEIM, and others beside the CAPTAIN. The SAN JOSEF had fallen on board of her, and both ships thus entangled were certain prizes to the remainder of the rapidly approaching fleet. Some of the officers of the SAN NICOLAS were collected in the after-cabin, a curious position from which to repel boarders. After a feeble resistance, which Nelson himself described as foolish, the SAN NICOLAS's colours came down, the PRINCE GEORGE still firing into her until the CAPTAIN's people hailed that she was in their possession. Some muskets were fired from the stern-gallery of the SAN JOSEF, and Nelson gave orders to board her also; but before the men could scramble up her lofty sides a Spanish officer looked over the quarter-deck rail, and informed them that the ship had been already surrendered. Like Fortinbras in HAMLET, Nelson came on to form the final tableau and bring down the curtain.

Of this action Allen, the author of *BATTLES OF THE BRITISH NAVY*, writes:

Although this or that ship might have struck to any individual ship, it does not follow that the prize in question was due to that ship. The credit of capturing the SAN YSIDRO has been awarded to the EXCELLENT, whereas the EXCELLENT had less to do in obliging that ship to surrender than either the CULLODEN or the BLENHEIM. It is also said that the SANTISSIMA TRINIDAD hauled down her colours to the ORION; but, admitting this, the ORION's list of wounded affords a clear proof it was not to the fire of that ship that the surrender was attributable. As well might we claim for

Nelson the capture of the *SAN JOSEF*, which he in his own letter does not claim. The Spanish prizes were prizes to the fleet generally; but especially to the *CAPTAIN*, *CULLODEN*, *BLENHEIM*, *EXCELLENT*, *PRINCE GEORGE*, &c.

No ship that is incapable of offering resistance to boarders can be captured by boarding. If the *SAN NICOLAS* can justly be said to have been so taken, why was the claim never advanced in the case of the *FOUGUEUX* at Trafalgar, which was boarded when much shattered by Lieutenant Kennedy and twenty-eight men of the *TÉMÉRAIRE*, or the *SAN AUGUSTIN*, which was boarded in the same great battle by Lieutenant Baldwin and a party of men from the *LEVIATHAN* who captured her without opposition?

Let us first understand what capture by boarding meant. A ship was not captured by the boat's crew which went on board to take possession of her after she had struck. To "run a ship on board" was to lay your own ship alongside or foul of an adversary in order to give your guns their fullest effect; it did not imply any actual assault by the crew of one ship upon the deck of another. Cutting-out expeditions and boat-attacks, in which the British sailor was absolutely unrivalled, should be considered apart. Boats carried no artillery save an occasional carronade, so with them it was board or nothing. Actions with privateers or pirates should also be set aside, for in them there was neither rule nor etiquette. For instance it was considered perfectly legitimate business to "give them the stem," to run them down; but it was a breach of good manners to behave so to any regular ship of war. For the purposes and within the limits of this paper we will confine ourselves to the consideration of single-ship actions, duels fought to a

finish, without interruption or interference, between ships of approximately equal force belonging to regular navies.

The typical sailor of the nautical drama and the nautical novel was a hard-drinking, hard-swearing, improvident personage, whose light-hearted custom it was to leave a wife, totally unprovided for, in every port he sailed from; to pay his just debts with the foresheet; to spend his rare moments of relaxation in frying his watch, lighting his pipe with bank-notes, and violently assaulting swabs, land-sharks, and such common objects of the seashore; and he was ever ready to abandon any and all of these simple pleasures in order to rescue beauty in distress, provided that it had no legal claim to his protection. It is by no means an impossible caricature. He may have been all or any of these things; but he was something more. Above and beyond everything else, he was a finished workman, and he thoroughly understood the use of his tools. It was his pride and pleasure to finish a job artistically, with a careful adaptation of means to end. In a word, he was seamanlike, and while his ship and his gun were capable of doing his work, he never left them.

There were excellent reasons why British ships should place their chief reliance on their gunnery. The successive Naval Boards, Commissioners, and Lords of the Admiralty were all alike in this; they calculated the regular establishment of British ships with a rigid economy of men. In 1793 the regular complement of a British eighteen-pounder 38-gun frigate was two hundred and seventy-seven officers and men; a French frigate of similar rate carried three hundred and twenty. The twelve-pounder 32-gun frigate went to sea with two hundred and seventeen men;

her French rival was manned by two hundred and seventy-five. The disparity of numbers made little difference in gunnery, but it was a serious factor in a hand-to-hand struggle. Moreover French ships carried a disproportionate number of supernumeraries. In the celebrated action between the PHŒNIX (36) and the DIDON (40) in 1805, the ships fell foul of each other, and both crews were summoned on board; but the DIDON carried three hundred and thirty men, the PHŒNIX only two hundred and forty-five; so the British crew were hard put to it to defend their own decks. When they had repulsed the French attack they did not attempt to board in turn, but conquered her by gun-fire. Again in 1808, the SEAHORSE (32) engaged a heavy Turkish frigate, the BADERE ZEPPER, which attempted to close and board her; but the SEAHORSE hauled to the wind and avoided the attack, because, says James, "such a mode of fighting would never have suited her small crew."

In 1761 when the two 74-gun ships, BELLONA and COURAGEUX, fought their great battle, the Bellona's mizenmast was shot away, and her rigging cut to pieces by the Frenchman's fire, which as usual was aimed high. Fearing lest the COURAGEUX should escape, Captain Faulkner gave orders to board. When the ships came in contact the larboard beam (it was *larboard* in those days) of the BELLONA was pressed against the starboard quarter of the COURAGEUX. This was a convenient position for the ready boarders, but it was also convenient for raking the enemy's ship; so the boarders were recalled to their guns and in twenty minutes the COURAGEUX surrendered, with two hundred of her men killed outright, while the BELLONA had only thirty-one casualties.

Of the seven cases in which the British crew boarded successfully, the first in point of time was that of the NYMPHE and CLÉOPÂTRE in 1793. The NYMPHE was commanded by Captain Edward Pellew, afterwards Lord Exmouth. His biographer Osler, whose materials were derived from Exmouth's own notes, states that when the ships came in contact after forty minutes' action it was supposed that the enemy were about to board, and the NYMPHE's crew were called on deck to repel the attack. Finding that the CLÉOPÂTRE was utterly disabled, Pellew ordered his boarders to attack. Led by Lieutenant Ball they forced an entrance through the main-deck ports and fought their way along the gangways to the quarter-deck. The French crew, though much superior in numbers, could not resist the impetuosity of the attack, and in less than ten minutes the ship was taken.

In 1796 the SOUTHAMPTON, a 32-gun frigate, attacked the French ship-corvette UTILE, of inferior force, near some batteries on the island of Porquerolles in Hyères Bay. After firing three broadsides, Captain Macnamara found himself unpleasantly close to a heavy battery. Time was precious, so the SOUTHAMPTON hauled across the bows of the UTILE; Lieutenant Lydiard led the boarders, and after a gallant resistance in which the French captain, François Vega, was killed, the corvette was taken. Had the batteries been two miles further off, there would have been no boarding.

In 1799 the ESPOIR brig boarded and carried the Spanish brig, AFRICA; and in 1806 the SPEEDY brig, of fourteen four-pounders, boarded and captured the Spanish twelve-pounder 32-gun frigate GAMO. This was the most wonderful of all the actions of that incomparable frigate-captain,

Lord Cochrane. His resource, his daring, and his luck were never surpassed in the history of the Navy. What other captain would have deliberately matched the *SPEEDY* and fifty-four men against the *GAMO* with her three hundred and nineteen? The little guns were used with so much judgment that the *GAMO*'s captain and boatswain were both killed by the first broadside of seven four-pound shot; but they were quite unable to pound her into submission. The Spanish twelve-pounders blazed away, but they could not be depressed sufficiently to strike the hull of the little brig which lay snug, close under them. Several times the Spaniards attempted to board, but the order was heard in both ships; as soon as they left their guns to attack, the brig sheered off, and grinned at them twenty feet away. The action was at a dead-lock; Cochrane briefly told his men that they must either take the frigate or be taken themselves; so the surgeon was left alone at the helm, and Cochrane led forty-seven men and boys on board the frigate. Forty-two were still unwounded when two hundred and sixty-three surviving Spaniards had been driven under hatches, and they took the prize into Port Mahon. The Navy has many records of a daring unequalled save in the romances of chivalry; but even there no greater marvel is recorded than this. But if the *SPEEDY* had carried twelve-pounder carronades instead of long four-pounders there would have been no need of boarding.

In 1808 the frigate *AMETHYST* (36), Captain Seymour, engaged the frigate *THÉTIS* (40) which was conveying troops and stores to Martinique. After two hours' action the Frenchman steered "to lay the *AMETHYST* in board;" in other words he ran foul of her. Seeing that the *THÉTIS* would strike the *AMETHYST* on the

bow and the consequent rebound would bring the quarters of the two ships together, Seymour bided his time, while the French officers, seamen, and troops assembled on their quarter-deck, ready to board as soon as the British frigate swung within reach. As the ships closed a double-shotted broadside from the *AMETHYST*'s eighteen-pounders swept away the crowded boarders; her anchor caught in the foremost main-deckport of the *THÉTIS* and held her fast while the British guns pounded her battery into silence. Then, and not till then, the *AMETHYST*'s boarders leaped on her decks and captured her.

It was in the same year that the British brig *PELICAN* boarded and captured the American brig *ARGUS*, and the *SHANNON* captured the *CHESAPEAKE*. The details of this glorious action are too well known to need recapitulation here; but in one respect it is almost unique. Captain Broke of the *SHANNON* had under him a ship which was practically undamaged, and a thoroughly effective battery. Yet as soon as his carefully-trained crew established a slight superiority over the less skilful gunners of the *CHESAPEAKE* he seized the first opportunity to call half his men from their well-laid guns and rush on board of her. It is at least possible that he might have gained his end with less loss of life if he had expended a little more time and powder over the business; but he knew that a victory over an American frigate was badly needed at that time, and he snatched at the earliest chance of it. His tactics were successful, but the example was dangerous. Norman Ramsay at Fuentes d'Onoro charged French cavalry at the head of his battery of horse-artillery; but it would be unwise to argue from his success that it was the proper function of horse-artillery to charge cavalry.

When the battle of Trafalgar gave Great Britain the unchallenged supremacy of the seas, and the strain which had been steadily growing tenser for twenty-two long years at length relaxed, there came a great and natural reaction. One of its results was seen in the neglect of gun-practice. The naval historian James, writing of an action which was fought in the Indian Ocean in 1806, says: "This is the second instance that has occurred in these seas within less than four months of a marked deficiency of gunnery on the part of British 74-gun ships." The ships in question were the *TREMENDOUS* and the *POWERFUL*. Six years later in 1812, according to the same authority: "The generality of British crews were miserably deficient in skill in the art of gunnery; and some ships could be named on board which not a shot had been fired at a mark for upwards of three years." Instructions had been issued which forbade captains to use, during the first six months after a ship received her armament, more shots per month than amounted to one-third in number of her upper-deck guns; after six months he was only allowed half that quantity. It is said that some captains, over-anxious to please the Lords of the Admiralty, never put a shot in a gun until an enemy appeared. Better men ignored the instructions altogether, and accounted for the deficiency as best they could. The Earl of St. Vincent, who retired from the office of First Lord in 1804, wrote nine years later to Captain E. P. Brenton: "I hear the exercise of the great gun is laid aside, and is succeeded by foolish frippery and useless ornament."

It is remarkable that nine out of our twelve cases of boarding took place after Trafalgar.

In the action between the *EPERVIER* brig and the American brig *PEACOCK*, fought in 1814, Captain Wales of the *EPERVIER* called upon his men to board, because their badly-mounted carronades were found to be useless; but his crew were demoralised by the punishment they had received from heavier guns and better gunners, and they would not follow him. In the same year, and under similar conditions, the crew of the *REINDEER* followed Captain Manners to attack the American brig *WASP*; but Manners was killed and the *REINDEER* captured. The same fate befel Captain Dickinson of the *PENGUIN* when he attempted to board the *HORNET* in 1813.

The year 1813 was full of such disregarded warnings. The crew of the dismasted *MACEDONIAN* were ready and eager to board the ponderous American frigate *UNITED STATES*, half as large again as the British ship; but they could not get their battered hulk near enough. Captain Lambert of the *JAVA* determined to board the huge *CONSTITUTION* as the only chance of success left, and ran her on board; but the *JAVA*'s bowsprit caught in the *CONSTITUTION*'s mizen-rigging, and he swung under her stern out of reach. In each of these actions the enemy's shot had rendered the smaller British ship practically helpless.

Yet the British sailor in an open boat, against an enemy's ship cleared for action with guns run out and boarding-nettings triced up all round her, was almost irresistible. The cutting-out of the *CERBÈRE* and the *CHEVRETTE* were feats no less marvellous than the capture of the *GAMO*. Take the case of the *HERMIONE* (32), a British frigate, whose crew had mutinied, murdered their officers, and handed the ship over

to the Spaniards. On the night of October 24th, 1799, the *HERMIONE* lay in the harbour of Puerto Cabello on the Spanish Main. She was ready for sea, moored head and stern between two strong batteries, one on each side of the harbour-mouth, mounting between them nearly two hundred guns; and on board of her were a crew of three hundred and sixty-five Spaniards. Through the darkness there rowed to attack her six boats under Captain Edward Hamilton of the frigate *SURPRISE* (28), carrying among them a hundred officers and men. A Spanish boat, which was rowing guard, observed and fired at them, and at the sound of the shot the *HERMIONE* awoke. The light of battle-lanterns glimmered through her open ports, and showed her men ready at their guns; the captain and officers were on the quarter-deck, and all was clear for action. Only two boats' crews, about thirty men, actually followed Hamilton on board, but among them they cut the cables and loosed the topsails. Sixteen more men joined them, and before the ship drifted out of the harbour, towed through the fire of the batteries by the rest of the boats, the Spaniards had surrendered with one hundred and nineteen men killed. The attempt was no less than heroic; its success was miraculous.

The glory of such feats as these, performed in exceptional circumstances, has been allowed to overshadow the regular work of the Navy. Courage as heroic, and

endurance as steady, were exhibited over and over again on the crowded, blood-spattered decks of a hundred ships whose dutiful crews fought their leaping guns through the eddying smoke-wreaths and the crashing destruction of many a hard-fought action; but the popular imagination has been captivated by the picture of Jack, cutlass in hand and pistol in belt, scrambling on board an enemy's ship to drive his foes down their own hatchways. Yet in spite of all the wonderful successes that were won by pike and cutlass in boat-attacks, the gun is, and always was, the sailor's weapon. With that he must win or lose. The history of those twenty-two years of naval war teaches us many things, and amongst them this,—that no effort of individual courage, no skill of cutlass or boarding-pike could avail against superior gunnery. The ship which failed in that might be carried by a score or two of resolute men, as the *GAMO* was. If the sailor could get at his enemy in no other way, he was ready and eager to hoist out boats and board against almost any odds; but where his ship and gun could go, Jack stuck to his ship and fought his gun, till the enemy ceased firing and the colours came fluttering down. When his ship was shattered and his gun silenced he sometimes boarded, as the one desperate chance left; but the last hopeless struggle of a beaten crew was rarely successful. For good or ill the sailor stood or fell by his gun.

W. J. FLETCHER.

AN HISTORICAL VILLAIN.

ON a cold evening in December, 1821, Mr. William Hazlitt, of literary fame, was speeding across England in a stage-coach. His destination was Newbury, where the great fight between the Gasman and Bill Neate was to take place. The night was dismal and rainy, and it was with a sigh of relief that Mr. Hazlitt at Reading exchanged the chill altitude of the box for the warm, if somewhat close atmosphere of the inside. Two men were in possession when he entered, the one an invalid wrapped up in a huge great-coat, the other Hazlitt recognised as Tom Turtle the trainer. All three men were bound for the contest, and with the good-fellowship born of this circumstance they were at once in the thick of a conversation.

Pugilism was of course the subject, and Turtle waxed eloquent on the art of training. It was all, he explained, a matter of diet and exercise, exercise and diet. This was the one golden rule, and forthwith the trainer proceeded to apply his principles by mapping out a day's training for an imaginary aspirant for pugilistic honours. The candidate having been conducted through twenty-four hours of exercising and dieting, the conversation drifted to other topics. The invalid in his zeal for pugilism had dragged himself from a three months' sick-bed, and straightway Mr. Hazlitt must crack his little joke at the expense of the doctors. And so the talk ran merrily on, with now and again references to the weather, the scenery, and the other staple subjects of light conversation.

On such matters Tom Turtle did not shine, indeed he speedily fell asleep. Only once did he break his repose, and then it was to enlarge on his pet subject once more. He had dreamed how the first three rounds of the fight would go, and, as next day proved, had dreamed correctly. After acquainting his companions with the result of his dreams, he once more resumed his slumbers and slept till the end of the journey. At Newbury the travellers parted. Three years later Hazlitt could boast that he had spent a night with John Thurtell, the notorious murderer of William Weare.

This was, as we have said, in 1821. At that time John Thurtell was in the full current of his career. He was then a well-known figure on the Turf and the Ring, and had a ready entrance into the inner circles of both. This eminent position he had reached by a circuitous path. Beginning life as the son of the respected Alderman, subsequently Mayor, Thurtell of Norwich, he naturally fell into his father's way of life and entered business. To what heights of solid respectability this might have led him, who shall say? It was not to be; Fate had other things in store for John Thurtell. His inclinations did not point towards the quiet paths of commerce, and thus, after a year or two, he broke away from his business and entered the Navy. The French war was then at its height, and Thurtell was soon under fire. He served on board the *BELLONA* from 1812 to 1814. In the latter year he was back at Norwich

and again in business, this time as a bombazin merchant.

After six years spent in this way our hero fell into bankruptcy. His methods of extricating himself did not commend themselves to his creditors. There were certain sums due to him from merchants in London, and he set out for town in order to collect them. After a day or two he returned and presented himself to his creditors with scars and bruises indeed, but without the money. The reason for this, he gallantly explained, was that he had been attacked by robbers on his way home who had relieved him of all the money in his possession. Now creditors are a proverbially harsh race of men, and so it is not surprising to learn that this tale of adventure was not believed. In any case John Thurtell's reputation was gone, and with his reputation all prospect of success in Norwich.

His native town having thus cast him out, his natural city of refuge was London. During his Norwich days he had frequently run up to town to be present at some sporting event, and thus he was not a stranger to the noble company of Bruisers. He figured there as the Swell Yokel, and there is reason to believe that he was nothing less than a godsend to all the sharpers of the town. It was his ambition to achieve fame as a leader in the sporting world. These were indeed the palmy days of pugilism, the days of Cribb and Belasco, of Tom of Bedford and the Berghampton Groom. "I have known the time," writes George Borrow,

when a pugilistic encounter between two noted champions was almost considered in the light of a national affair; when tens of thousands of individuals high and low meditated and brooded upon it, the first thing in the morning and the last at night, until the great event was decided. But the time is past, and many people

will say, thank God that it is; all I have to say is that the French still live on the other side of the water, and are still casting their eyes hitherward—and that in the days of pugilism it was no vain boast to say that one Englishman was a match for two of t'other race; at present it would be a vain boast to say so, for these are not the days of pugilism. . . . Let no one sneer at the bruisers of England—what were the gladiators of Rome, or the bull-fighters of Spain in its palmiest days compared to England's bruisers? Pity that ever corruption should have crept in amongst them—but of that I wish not to talk; let us still hope that a spark of the old religion, of which they were the priests, still lingers in the hearts of Englishmen.

This eloquent passage is, in its facts, almost literally correct. John Thurtell himself at his trial was not afraid to say in open court: "If I have erred in these things [pugilism and racing] half of the nobility of the land have been my examples; some of the most enlightened statesmen of the country have been my companions."

By a fortunate disposition of Providence Borrow and Thurtell were both connected with the capital of Norfolk about the same time. When the former was fourteen years old (that would be in the year 1817 if he gives his age correctly, as is not always the case,) he was present at a fight not far from Norwich. Amid other interesting details of the fight Borrow gives us the following:

The terrible Thurtell was present, lord of the concourse; for wherever he moved he was master, and whenever he spoke, even when in chains, every other voice was silent. He stood on the mead grim and pale, as usual, with his bruisers around. He it was indeed who *got up* the fight as he had previously done with respect to twenty others; it being his frequent boast that he had first introduced bruising and bloodshed amidst rural scenes, and transformed a quiet slumbering town into a den of Jews and metropolitan thieves.

This graphic little sketch Borrow was enabled to supplement at a later date, and the Borrowian will find in the twenty-fourth chapter of *LAVENGRO* a vivid description of Thurtell's appearances in the year 1820.

That year was a notable period in our hero's history. It was then that the great battle between Tom Oliver and Ned Painter was fought at North Walsham. Thurtell had arranged it, and was inordinately proud of his hand in the affair, referring to it a day or two before his execution with the greatest satisfaction. It was indeed a great event in the pugilistic world. To the small town at which it was held came many thousands of spectators,—thirty-five thousand in all, it is said; peers and clergymen, sportsmen and squires, and all the young bloods from town mixed in one motley crowd with rustic farmers and unsophisticated villagers. And then, when amid thunder and lightning the whole company swept off the field, what a procession that must have been and what a moment in the life of John Thurtell! It was as the spectators hurried from the ground that Mr. Petulengro, the gipsy, touched Borrow on the shoulder as he stood watching the rapid exodus and pointed to the sky. There, in the darkness, was visible a cloud of vivid and strange colour. "That cloud foreshadoweth a bloody *dukkeripen*," muttered the gipsy; "his," he added, —and pointed to John Thurtell driving past in an open barouche.

The gipsy's prophecy was fulfilled. When Thurtell next came before the public all England rang with his name. In July, 1824, he was brought before the Assize at Hereford to be tried on the charge of murdering William Weare in the previous October. It is doubtful if any crime in this country has excited more interest and curiosity. The history

of it was dramatised and put on the stage; the newspapers were full of it; Charles Lamb made mention of it in his letters; Hook wrote some ghastly doggerel on it; and even Sir Walter Scott, (who notes in his diary how it "let John Bull into one of his most uncommon fits of gambols, until at last he became so maudlin as to weep for the pitiless assassin") on one of his journeys from London to Scotland, went out of his way to view the spot where it was committed.

The annals of crime do not perhaps record a more brutal and cold-blooded murder. There is not one redeeming feature in the whole story. Even that low cunning which makes a crime almost a work of art, and compels a certain homage to the malefactor, was altogether wanting; there was neither skill nor common prudence in either the plan or its execution. Indeed the only point of interest is the stony callousness of the criminal. There is a general and long-cherished opinion, or delusion, that the murderer, in his own dark fashion, involuntarily evinces that awe for the dead felt by the happier portion of mankind, and trembles before the body of his victim. Our moralists have it that, the deed accomplished, straightway the ghastly form of the murdered man returns to haunt and dwell in the criminal's imagination,

cheering the hounds
Of conscience to their prey.

Shakespeare has painted the horrors of remorse in *Macbeth*; and, to come by a leap to modern times, Stevenson's powerful study of *MARKHEIM* turns on the "tremour of the belly" and the nameless physical shrinkings that beset the murderer as he gazes on his handiwork.

But there were, it would seem, no

physical shrinkings and no mental agonies on the part of John Thurtell. Mr. Weare was invited by him to pay a short visit to St. Albans. Near that town one of Thurtell's friends, a publican named Probert, had a small cottage at which they were to stay. Weare accepted the invitation. There had for some time been a breach in the friendship which once existed between the two men, owing to Thurtell's having accused Weare of swindling him out of a large sum of money. This knavery on the part of his friend, for the charge was well-founded, aroused Thurtell's furious resentment: "If I have an opportunity," he muttered to one of his companions, "I mean to do him, for he has robbed me of several thousands." But no suspicion seems to have crossed Weare's mind on receiving the invitation; they were going down, as Thurtell grimly explained to him, for a day's shooting.

On the evening of Friday, October 24th, 1823, Weare and Thurtell set out from London to drive to their destination. Probert and a friend named Hunt followed in another gig. The whole scheme had already been arranged by these three men and, if the unsuspecting Weare had been enabled to look into the second gig, he might have seen there a sack and a rope,—his winding-sheet.

What happened on that dark journey we only know from Probert's evidence at the trial. Apparently, in one of the narrow lanes near Elstree and not far from Probert's cottage, Thurtell made his attack. He suddenly produced a pistol and fired at Weare, hitting him on the cheek; but the bullet glanced off without causing much injury. Weare sprang from the gig and ran wildly along the road; he would give up all he had, he screamed in terror, if only his life were spared. Little did he

understand the man with whom he had to deal. Thurtell soon overtook him, knocked him down, cut his throat, and by way of completing the business, drove the pistol into his skull. "I gave it a turn," he said; "and then I knew that I had done him."

The murderer dragged the body behind the hedge at the side of the road, and set out for the cottage. On the way he was joined by Probert and Hunt, who had dallied at various public-houses in the course of their journey. Mrs. Probert and her guests (her sister and some nephews and nieces of Thurtell) received the three travellers with the most cordial welcome. They all sat down to supper, and a very pleasant meal it was. Good humour was the order of the evening: Hunt entertained the company with songs; and Thurtell, infected with the prevailing geniality, presented Mrs. Probert with a gold chain taken from the murdered man, and this, be it noted, in the presence and with the approval of her husband. Of Probert's conduct during the evening Thurtell forcibly remarked at the trial: "He did not refuse even by his own account to admit a man to his house hot from slaughter, and to introduce him as a companion to his wife."

After the family had retired to rest, the three associates returned to the place of the murder. They had already conceived a plan for disposing of the body. With the help of one of the horses they dragged it to the cottage and hurled it into a pond within the garden. Mrs. Probert, whose suspicions for some unexplained reason had been aroused, looking out through her bedroom window saw her husband and his two guests dragging a dark object along the garden-path and heard a

noise which she likened to that of a heap of stones being thrown into a pit. She crept from her room down the stair. The men had returned to the parlour, and as she listened she heard them apportioning and dividing the property of the unfortunate Weare. When the conversation ended Mrs. Probert was in bed.

Had the revelation of the crime depended on this woman the murderers would have had little to fear. It was by their own conduct that the rope was prepared for their necks. They were observed at the place of the murder next morning; with a strange want of caution, and an equally strange callousness, they wore the clothes of the dead man and were seen with some of the articles he had carried with him from town. Two or three days after the crime Probert's conscience (shall we say?) troubled him, and he insisted that the dead body should be removed from his pond. This was done; it was taken away, and hidden in another pond at a greater distance from the cottage.

The result of all this folly was a foregone conclusion. In less than a week from the murder Thurtell was arrested in London. In his rooms were found some blood-stained garments lying about apparently without any attempt at concealment.

All these circumstances taken together made conviction a certainty. Thurtell, however, was not the man to throw away any chance. He would die hard. At the trial he

made a speech in his own defence which drew from the judge the remark that (except in its legal aspect) the speech was "eminently manly, energetic, and powerful." He dwelt on his openness and the absence of any attempt at concealment; Probert (who had turned King's evidence) and Hunt, he argued, were clearly the only guilty parties. As for himself, he was innocent. "There is not," he declared in his peroration, "there is not, I think, one in this Court who does not think me innocent of this charge. If there be, to him or them, I say in the language of the Apostle, 'Would to God ye were altogether such as I am save these bonds.' Gentlemen, I have now done. I look with confidence to your decision. I hope your verdict will be such as you may ever after be able to think upon with a composed conscience; and that you will also reflect upon the solemn declaration which I now make. So help me God!"

Despite this energetic appeal the jury found him guilty. As he quitted the dock he remarked that he thought the lads of the village would be pleased with him. Whatever may have been his vices cowardice was certainly not one of them. During the short period that elapsed between his condemnation and his execution his composure seems never to have deserted him; and his chief regret was that he could not be present at a prize-fight which was to take place about this time. He was executed on January 9th, 1824.

COWPER'S OUSE.

THE Great Ouse is undistinguished among western waters: his very title is disputed by the channel in which the united rivers of Yorkshire find their way to the Humber; and yet he is the fifth largest English river.

His is no impetuous stream tearing down to the sea in a bed that is sometimes water, sometimes heaps of stones; he pursues a temperate career, never runs dry, and is seldom overfull. The fortresses of more troubled days are no longer reflected in his waves; no legends of hard-riding Dick or other heroic robber linger in the memories of those who dwell on his sedgy banks; not even the genius of Sir Walter could weave romances in which the Ouse would play a part. He has never been a border-river since the days of the Danelagh; he belongs to the Midlands, and has had no occasion for those strings of castles which once defended and now adorn the Tweed, the Tyne, the Severn, and the Wye.

In the region of Newport Pagnell the Great Ouse first begins to be a noticeable river; here is the head on which are set his two horns. From the south-east comes the Little Ouse, Ousel, or Lovat, thus variously named, after collecting half the waters of the Chiltern Hills and draining the eastern region of the Vale of Aylesbury; the Ousel is still little better than a large brook, but has already travelled some score of miles. The other horn, the Ouse proper, has gathered his peaceful flood in the western uplands of Northamptonshire. His longest tributary may be traced beyond Brackley to the neighbourhood of Banbury, and,

being fed by numerous winding brooks, takes the shape of a river not many miles to the west of Buckingham. Eight miles below the little borough which gives its name to a county, the Ouse receives at Wolverton the waters of the Tone. Here, in the early days of railways, trains stopped half-way between London and Birmingham to give weary travellers the opportunity of rest and refreshment; and here the valley is crossed by a viaduct, which was once considered an imposing triumph of engineering. From Wolverton to Newport Pagnell is by road four miles, by river nearer ten, and there the larger stream takes up his little brother for the rest of their winding ramble to the German Ocean.

Nobody ever set out to reach a given destination with less anxiety about eventually arriving there than the Ouse, when he decided that, after leaving Newport Pagnell, it was as well to go to Bedford. Being a river-god he may be credited with wisdom superior to that of mortals; and perhaps he was right in expatiating in his meadows, listening to the clatter of his poplar leaves, taking his pastime in broad deeps, and ever and anon losing his way among beds of reeds. The upshot of it all is that, whereas mere men make it a thirteen-mile walk, our river travels forty, and is eventually so reluctant to pass under the graceful bridge by the Swan Hotel, that the Midland Railway crosses him seven times in the seven miles between Bedford and Sharnbrook.

This sort of conduct might be par-

donable in a nymph or other light-hearted feminine divinity, but in a sober old river calls for reprobation. Father Thames shakes his head over it pointing to his own noble curves, and even the twisting Tees thinks there should be a limit to capriciousness, though his conscience is a little uneasy about his performances in the neighbourhood of Darlington. He, however, can plead mountains at his source, mountains without lakes, always trying to a river that wishes to be respectable. But the Ouse knew what was to happen to him; he knew that he would be caught up by Dutch engineers at Earith, and that the better part of him, hemmed between earth-works, would have to run in two parallel straight lines across the Fens to enter the Wash at Lynn through an ungraceful cut; and thus he made his playground in the broad meadows above Bedford before departing for those regions where unlovely science was to prevail over his artless whims.

The valley between Newport Pagnell and Bedford is Cowper's country. It is here that the Ouse gives us a scenery all his own, as he travels in his leisurely way around three sides of a quadrilateral tableland, whose greatest elevation is nowhere more than four hundred feet, but whose flanks descend to the meadows with some suddenness in places, and yet with no precipitous rudeness. The floor of the valley is flat, sometimes a mile across, sometimes a few hundred yards, and the river shifts from side to side as his fancy leads; but wherever he hugs the slopes, his stream is deep and broad and clear. It is the reproach of sluggish rivers that they are muddy, but not so the Ouse. A narrow fringe of water-lilies on either shore marks the limit of earthiness; between those the channel, twenty to forty yards in

breadth, is apparently paved with stone, for a twelve-foot punt-pole grates along the rocky bottom. As our river never discloses the dark secrets of his bed like the shameless Tees, we can only guess at the causes of this absence of sediment in his still deeps, and may conjecture springs breaking into his channel from below, sufficient in quantity to carry away, even in summer-time, the light deposits of a stream not subject to the violent incursions of mountain torrents.

The Ouse has never been a highway of any importance; he cannot boast of a romantic population of barges like the Thames, or his own tributary, the Cam, which brings him much mud, and no less learning, let us hope, from Cambridge. Commerce does not trouble a river that has no commodity to send seawards, except such fruits of the earth as, in the present decay of English agriculture, we are more apt to receive from beyond the German Ocean than to transmit to our neighbours. As far up as Bedford there are locks, but above Bedford not only have we those sevenfold windings which rival Styx "nine times interfused," but the river, in so much of his course a natural canal, deliberately places a well-considered impediment in the way of such as might be tempted to burden him with the vulgarities of trade; for when he elects to leave the slopes on one side or the other of his valley, and cross the meadows, he straightway breaks up into two, or even three, narrow and frequently shallow streams, and thus continuing for a mile or so, defies any but the smallest boats to travel on his current; whence it has happened that a river some two hundred and fifty miles long, running through fertile land in a populous country, has only one town of any great importance on

its banks. Buckingham, Bedford, Huntingdon, are, indeed, county towns, but the first of the three is little better than a village; Bedford owes its recent expansion, not to trade, but to John Harpur, the benefactor of its schools; Huntingdon is at most a couple of sizes bigger than Buckingham; even Ely, the largest of the Ouse towns before we reach the sea, was made by monks, not by merchants, and is indebted to its cathedral, not to its trade, for such fame as it enjoys. At King's Lynn alone does commerce fairly lay her hand upon the river, King's Lynn from whence started, so early as 1330 A.D., the first expedition in search of the North Pole; it was conducted by one Nicholas, a Carmelite Friar, who set out for the Arctic regions relying on his astrolabe, and, so the chronicles of Lynn inform us, was reckoned to have got there.

Action and the Ouse are out of harmony; from the time when Canute paused upon his waters to listen to the singing of the monks of Ely, his heroes have been men of religion rather than of war. True there is one notable exception; Oliver Cromwell was a son of the Ouse, but a large part of him was in the traditions of his native stream. Oliver the saint had mused for many years among the meadows between Huntingdon and Ely before he became Oliver the man of war; and the warrior was not content with beating the Scots in the field at Dunbar, he set his heart, no less on achieving a controversial victory over the Presbyterians at Edinburgh, where, indeed, he was confronted with greater stubbornness.

In the Wars of the Roses Olney and Emberton witnessed the return of the King-maker, and the dispersion of the northern forces under Sir John Conyers and Robin of Redesdale; but these events have left no local record.

In the seventeenth century the restless Catesby had a house at Hardmead in the hills, four miles from Olney; Gayhurst, the home of Sir Everard Digby, a house well known to Cowper, is not far off, and the young knight was entangled in Catesby's madcap scheme by the agency of Father Garnett; whence came local traditions of underground passages at Gayhurst, of Digby's hole, a secret way to the river. Sir Kenelm Digby also lived at Gayhurst, and left a trace of himself in a breed of edible snails, which he imported for the benefit of the incomparable Venetia; they were held by the faculty of those days to be good food for consumptive persons. The villagers of Gayhurst have not long ceased to look for "Digby's hoddies."

And Bunyan too is of the Ouse; was not the greater part of the PILGRIM'S PROGRESS written in Bedford Gaol? There are records of his preaching at Olney and other places along the river.

Lekh Richmond, the well-known writer of Evangelical stories, was rector of Turvey for thirty years; in fact, the theological attitude of the river has always been in the Evangelical direction. There were monasteries near his banks, but they did not flourish; the religious houses at Bradwell, Tickford, Ravenstone, Lavendon, Turvey, were already far gone in decay at the Dissolution, and were never on the scale of the great Cistercian establishments of the north. It was the Evangelical element at Olney that brought to the Ouse its inspired worshipper, who was to give the river such fame as it might otherwise have missed. Cowper's connection with the Ouse began at Huntingdon in 1765, and ended at Weston Underwood in 1795; for the whole of those thirty years he never left its banks except for one visit of six weeks to

Hayley's home in Sussex towards the end of the period.

Olney in itself is not a particularly attractive little town; it can boast a noble church, but there is little else in it to excite the attention of a visitor. It was not Olney, but Olney's curate, that caused the place to be selected as the poet's residence; but though Olney is not itself beautiful, the surrounding country is very beautiful indeed, and the more romantic splendours of the lakes have failed to inspire prose or verse more delightful than the letters and poems of William Cowper.

The second Earl of Dartmouth married the heiress of one Sir Charles Nicholl, an extensive landowner in Olney and the district. In his youth the Earl came under the influence of the famous Countess of Huntingdon, and was, like her, a leader in the Evangelical world, in the world of Whitefield and Wesley. He does not appear to have resided in his wife's house at Olney, but he was much interested in the spiritual welfare of the little place; by his recommendation the Reverend John Newton was appointed curate at Olney, nor did he withhold his countenance from Sutcliffe, the great Baptist preacher, from whose seminary at Olney went Carey the missionary and orientalist. Five miles off, at Newport Pagnell, was one of the earliest Congregational churches; on the hill at Clifton Reynes the rector was a noted Evangelical, Mr. Jones, the brother-in-law of Lady Austen. In those days the line between Nonconformist Evangelicals and Church of England Evangelicals was not rigidly drawn; what they had in common was more than that in which they differed; clergymen of the Church of England, who were at all earnest, had more sympathy with the Baptist Sutcliffe and the Congregational Bull than with fox-hunting

country parsons or the prelates of the court. Thus the Methodist movement was stronger then in country districts than it is now; it was supported by the wealthy and refined, as well as by small tradesmen and artisans. Not only Lord Dartmouth, but other county gentlemen and ladies in the Olney neighbourhood favoured the Methodists. The result was the society to which Mrs. Unwin brought Cowper.

The virtues of Mrs. Unwin have become an article of faith with many lovers of Cowper. The poet's exquisite expression of his attachment to her; the high value which he set upon her literary judgment; the tenderness with which he waited on her decline; the beautiful pictures which he has drawn of their domestic life; her own long patience under the anxieties of his weak mental health,—all these combine to form a picture of human relations so full of charm, that those who have once realised it resent any change in the arrangement of its lights and shadows. If, however, we are to do justice to our poet, it is due to him to pursue some inquiry into the features in his intellectual history, in his artistic life, which were introduced or at any rate developed by the influence of Mrs. Unwin. We may grant as a defect in the poet's organisation that he was one of those men who cannot walk of themselves, who are by the law of their nature dependent upon the judgment of some other person, whose affection imposes upon them a loss of liberty. It was necessary that Cowper should rely upon somebody; but it was not necessary that he should rely upon Mrs. Unwin. Many a woman has laid upon the object of her devotion a yoke which was never felt, and never consciously attached. The truest affection, resulting in mu-

tual self-sacrifice, may exist between husband and wife, and yet the partner, who is apparently the gainer, may really be the loser in the partnership; this is particularly apt to be the case when one of the partners is an artist, and the other a very loving, but only an ordinarily well-informed human being.

Cowper was by birth and education a member of the English aristocracy; he was a classical scholar of considerable attainments; he was exceptionally well read in English literature; he was no milksop; as a schoolboy he was distinguished in athletics; he was humorous, witty, merry, and affectionate, with an unusual power of attracting friendship, especially the friendship of women and young men, and this power he retained to the last years of his life. It is exceptional for a man of sixty to love or be loved by a new acquaintance; but Cowper won the heart of his distant cousin, John Johnson, a Cambridge undergraduate, who called on him at Weston, when he was nearly sixty; this new acquaintance afterwards cared for and tended him with no less assiduity than Mrs. Unwin, and in circumstances no less, if not more, painful. Among Cowper's many bright, affectionate letters few are more bright and affectionate than those to his young relative.

Mrs. Unwin was the daughter of a linen-draper at Ely. There is no crime in being the daughter of a linen-draper, but distinctions of rank and distinctions of training were much sharper in the middle of the eighteenth century than they are now. She was by birth and associations far removed from the world in which Cowper had been brought up. She is said to have been pretty and witty. Her husband was a clergyman, very much older than

herself, who lived the life of an absentee rector at Huntingdon, where he took private pupils, and held the post of reader in the church. The immorality of absenteeism was not regarded in those days with the same rigour that it is now; but the Unwins lived the life of Methodists. A day with them was divided between public and private prayers, pious conversation, and pious reading, enlivened by the singing of hymns to the accompaniment of Mrs. Unwin's harpsichord. It seems strange that such good people should not have thought of their parishioners at Grimston, and should not have seen some incongruity in the comfortable profession of religion at Huntingdon, while they were drawing a stipend from their neglected country parish.

Two years before Mr. Unwin's sudden death Cowper arrived at Huntingdon. He had just recovered from his first severe attack of mania and wished to live in the country near his brother, who was a fellow of Benet College, Cambridge; suitable lodgings could not be found within a shorter distance. At first he lived alone, except for the attendance of a man-servant, whom he brought with him from the private asylum in which he had been cured; then he was attracted by young William Unwin, who was just finishing his course at Cambridge and was shortly to take orders. He was introduced to the family; the liking was mutual, and eventually Cowper begged to be allowed to take the place of a pupil in the house. A year later Mr. Unwin was killed by a fall from his horse. He seems to have expressed some wish that, in the event of his death, Cowper might continue to live with his widow, and the arrangement was acceptable to both parties. Cowper speaks of the maternal affection

of Mrs. Unwin for him, and his filial tenderness towards her.

Just at this moment John Newton, who had recently been appointed curate at Olney, happened to come to Huntingdon. His preaching attracted Mrs. Unwin, who made his acquaintance, and asked him to find a house for herself and Cowper in Olney or its immediate neighbourhood. This was done, and in 1767 began Cowper's long life at Olney.

There could have been no more unfortunate arrangement. Cowper's malady was that terrible mania of morbid fear impelling the sufferer to self-destruction; before and after an attack he was given to religious questionings, not of a particularly gloomy character, being indeed such as are often indulged in by those in good health. Occupation was good for him, was indeed necessary alike for his bodily and mental health; but excitement was deadly. His first attack was brought on by a dread of having to appear in the House of Lords and prove himself qualified to be a clerk of that august assembly, for he had a horror of publicity in any form.

This being the case, and Mrs. Unwin knowing that it was the case, he was taken by her and handed over bodily to the care of a revivalist preacher of an energetic and noisy type. John Newton had been a sailor before the mast; having been a profane swearer like Bunyan, he had been converted by a special interposition of Providence on his behalf in a rescue from shipwreck; he had then been captain of a slaver, and eventually a tide-surveyor at Liverpool. This post he gave up to take orders, impelled by a sense of duty and fitness. He believed in special interpositions of Providence, even in trivial matters, in sudden conversions; he was, in many respects, a Calvinist,

but not a gloomy one. His preaching was such that the people of Olney attributed cases of insanity to its effects. It was to this Boanerges of a man that Mrs. Unwin brought Cowper, the tender, shrinking, refined, delicate scholar, suffering from a definite nervous malady.

Newton, a thoroughly good-hearted and affectionate man, took possession of Cowper; for thirteen years they were hardly separated for more than twelve hours out of the twenty-four, except when a recurrence of Cowper's insanity rendered his seclusion necessary. Newton rode about to the different villages in the neighbourhood, holding open-air meetings, preaching in cottages, praying by death-beds. In all these Cowper accompanied him; long prayer-meetings were held in Lord Dartmouth's empty house at Olney, and Cowper, to whom "publicity was poison," was encouraged to take a leading part in them. The result was very soon a recurrence of his malady, which lasted in all for eighteen months, in an acute form for six; and the pair of well-intentioned blunderers allowed their friend's illness to grow on him for more than a year before they thought of consulting Dr. Cotton, who had cured him at St. Albans.

This was not the whole of the injury which Mrs. Unwin did to Cowper. She estranged him from his relations, or, rather, allowed an estrangement to continue which had begun at the period of his first illness. What Cowper lost by this we may gather from his first letter written to his cousin, Lady Hesketh, in reply to one of hers after a silence of nineteen years. The delight with which Cowper recurs to the innocent pleasures of his youth, to the days that were spent in "giggling and making giggle," his almost painfully eager anticipations of the joy of seeing his old friend

again, are expressed as though by a man starving for sympathy, who has suddenly realised all that he had foregone, and is impatient of any delay in returning to happier scenes. Newton left Olney, fortunately for Cowper, in 1780, and the succeeding ten years were the happiest of Cowper's life after his first breakdown. There was another gleam of light, a break in the clouds of Unwinism in which Cowper had allowed himself to be enveloped. This was the intercourse with Lady Austen, which began almost immediately after Newton's departure; it is to this that we owe *THE DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN AND THE TASK*.

There can be no possible doubt that Mrs. Unwin was jealous of Lady Austen; and there can be no less doubt that she had reason to be jealous. She had been engaged to marry Cowper, but the contract was broken off at the time of his madness at Olney. She saw that "brother William and sister Ann" could not continue to live on those terms, though Cowper might choose to please himself with the simile of a three-fold cord of which she was herself one of the strands. But the moment Cowper realised that he had entered upon more than friendly relations with Lady Austen he broke the connection. Could a woman desire more than this? Apparently Mrs. Unwin was not satisfied, for she allowed Cowper to write as follows to her son after Lady Austen had left Olney:

You are going to Bristol. A lady, not long since our near neighbour is probably there, she was there very lately. If you should chance to fall into her company, remember, if you please, that we found the connexion in some respects an inconvenient one; that we do not wish to renew it; and conduct yourself accordingly. A character with which we spend all our time should be made on purpose for us; too much or too little of any

ingredient spoils all. In the instance in question the dissimilitude was too great not to be felt continually, and consequently made our intercourse unpleasant. We have reason however to believe that she has given up all thoughts of a return to Olney.

It took Cowper three years to find out the unpleasantness of this painful dissimilitude. He writes in his own name and Mrs. Unwin's, who might surely have written to her son herself, and spared Cowper the humiliation of this disingenuous and ungenerous epistle. Cowper had satisfied all that Mrs. Unwin could possibly demand; he had sent Lady Austen away; he had practically, if not actually, said that he felt himself so bound to Mrs. Unwin that he could marry no one else; could she not have let the matter be? Cowper could have had no fear that Lady Austen would attempt to renew the intercourse by the mediation of young Unwin; he was a gentleman, and Lady Austen was a lady; in fact, Mrs. Unwin, like many other beneficent men and women, was over-tenacious of her power, over-apprehensive of its loss. She had made Cowper quarrel with Lady Austen once before, and there had been a reconciliation; this time she was determined not to risk the fruits of victory by any possible oversight. She was not, however, permanently cured of her jealousy; a little postscript to a letter of Cowper, addressed to Lady Hesketh, written and signed by Mrs. Unwin at a later time, shows that there were still occasional quarrels with Cowper's friends.

In fact, Mrs. Unwin was not of Cowper's world; she was not of his intellectual world any more than she was of his social world. Under Newton's influence Cowper could only write hymns; under Mrs. Unwin's, rather commonplace satire or mild preaching; it was Lady Austen who

showed him what he could do with the incidents of everyday life, and who elicited from him the matchless descriptions in *THE TASK*. Mrs. Unwin restricted his reading to the Bible, the newspaper, and devotional works; under Mrs. Unwin's influence he pours contempt on geology and astronomy, and gives advice about the reading of the Bible which would inevitably lead us to the abysmal ignorance of the Boers. Mrs. Unwin tolerated his humorous side, his powers of dramatic description; Lady Austen and Lady Hesketh enjoyed them. It is to Mrs. Unwin that we owe the popular conception of Cowper as a mild, mad man, who kept tame hares and wore a white cap. But the real Cowper was a finished gentleman, running over with fun and laughter, particular about his personal appearance, able to be accepted on his own terms by the Wrights of Gayhurst, the Chesters of Chicheley, and above all by his delightful "Mr. and Mrs. Frog," the Throgmortons of Weston Underwood.

The excitements of society were too much for Cowper's delicate nerves, nor had he any sympathy with sport: he preferred taming hares to chasing them; but he also loved the intimate companionship of a few chosen friends, and he could always find them. Such intercourse was good for him, better for him even than visiting the sick in their homes, and other active charities in which he was engaged. Cowper was no respecter of persons; he made friends in all classes of society; he is as proud of the affection of his man Sam as of that of Mrs. Courtenay, "my lady of the ink-bottle," and when living at Olney he would run across the road with his last copy of verses to Mr. Wilson, the barber, a genial tonsor who is still remembered by old residents in Olney, and whose shop

was the informal club of the little town.

We may give Mrs. Unwin her due; devoting herself to Cowper as few would have done she nursed and cared for him in every way; we may respect her devotion, and yet we must regret her limitations. She went the wrong way to work to effect the restoration of his health, and who knows what he might have done had he been in the habit of reading with a woman of more profound literary accomplishments?

In spite of Mrs. Unwin's restrictions, Cowper remains one of the few consummate masters of the English language. His letters are generally admitted to be incomparable, the high-water mark of pure, light, easy English prose; the words and the ideas fit like a glove; both are alike graceful and delicate. Not that Cowper could not be stern upon occasion; he is perhaps the only one of Dr. Johnson's contemporaries who could pass an unfavourable criticism upon him with no sense of temerity. There are strong bits of satire in his poetry, as well as those that are weak; and even when his religiosity offends us we would do well to remember that what he says is frequently worth saying, though the form in which it is said has gone out of fashion; nor is he deficient in shrewdness and strong common sense. As a descriptive poet he has never been surpassed; he is minute in his observation and yet has the gift of selection; he loved the scenes in which his innocent life was spent, perhaps more than Dr. Johnson loved Fleet Street.

It is a misfortune that the best-known portraits of Cowper, those which have been most frequently reproduced, represent him in a strange white cap, and have thus contributed to make us think of him solely or chiefly as eccentric. The children of Weston Underwood, during the last

years of the poet's residence on the Ouse, when his suicidal mania was talked about in the locality, were much terrified by this cap; but we are not children, and even though Cowper was sometimes insane, have no right to despise his teaching on that account. Dr. Johnson was subject to melancholy, though in a less degree than Cowper, but we do not consider him effeminate; both were devoutly pious. The cap in question was worn by all gentlemen in the time of perukes, who did not wish to spend the whole of their day magnificently bewigged. Cowper's was a particularly smart affair, made for him by Lady Hesketh, and adorned with a ribbon and a bow. Hogarth has represented himself in a similar cap; but we do not suspect him of too much mildness.

The best picture of Cowper is probably that in the National Portrait Gallery; it was painted by Romney at the same time as the better-known one, in which a stagey effect is produced by the position of the eyes, as of one listening for inspiration. The less-known portrait represents the poet with a silk handkerchief thrown over the back of his head, which is inclined forward; full justice is done to the delicate lips and the earnest eyes. Romney seems to have kept this more natural study, and it was sold with the rest of his effects.

At Weston Underwood Cowper was well above the Ouse, and could look from the upper windows of his house across the river, and beyond the high ground of Filgrave to the Brickhills, and even down the valley of the Ousel to the distant Chilterns, a smiling but almost mountainous prospect; for it is one of Ouse's tricks to veil his gentle slopes in such a gauzy haze as gives the effect of steep hills and mighty distances. Behind Weston is Yardley Chase,

with the great oaks that Cowper worshipped. The tree to which he addressed an unfinished poem is pollarded; the real monarchs of the forest are two, a little further from Weston, which he used often to visit, and sometimes known as Gog and Magog. One of them, however, is also known as Judith, and there is a tradition that it was planted by, or in honour of, the Countess Judith, half-sister of William the Conqueror, to whom the greater part of the surrounding country was given by her brother. The trees are certainly of very great antiquity, and the fact that they alone among the ancient oaks of the forest have been left unpollarded indicates some special association.

The last years of the poet's life at Weston are painful to think of. Mrs. Unwin was breaking down, and Cowper, from having been patient had become nurse; insanity gained upon him, and took a new form, which was aggravated by the misguided ministrations of a foolish schoolmaster at Olney. Still, there were lucid intervals, and not unfrequent flashes of the old bright wit. In 1795 his cousin Johnson removed the invalids to Norfolk. Mrs. Unwin died the following year, and at the end of April, 1800, Cowper's tortured clay found rest.

A century has passed since Cowper rambled by the Ouse,—a century of unparalleled movement in all that advances the material resources of mankind—and yet how little we are changed! The Frenchman still hates an Englishman as he did when *THE TASK* was written; England is again at war in one of her colonies; the Evangelical movement has done its work, and quieted down; but is Cowper's call to greater earnestness any less necessary to-day than it was a hundred years ago? Amusement

still takes the first place in the thoughts of the many; the drunkard still staggers in our streets; behind the noble frontages of our expanded towns there is still the squalid heap of derelict humanity. Cowper does not bid us to be gloomy; his call is not to asceticism, but to a recognition that there is something more to be lived for than the satisfaction of our own desires. Particular forms of recreation were needlessly offensive to the society with which he lived. We smile when we find him dealing no less severely with a clergyman who played the violin after service on Sundays, than with his sporting neighbour. His detestation of card-playing appears to us out of proportion; but then we have forgotten what card-playing meant in those days,—what an endless waste of time, of health, of money. Whenever we are disposed to be annoyed with Cowper's disproportionate censures, we must recall the circumstances in which he lived, the dependence upon others imposed by his malady, and the not altogether happy fate which determined those who should control his destinies at a critical period of his life. Surely there must, after all, have been an enormous vitality in the man to write as much as he did, and as well as he did, placed as he was.

Of all our teachers Cowper is the most sincere; he lived as he preached, brightening the common things of life with humour, sanctifying them with love; and this is why the gentle Ouse has his votaries. It is impossible to dissociate his water-lilies and his reeds, his poplars and his willows, his broad meadows and wooded slopes, from the memory of the man of whom it was said: "If

there is a good man living, it is William Cowper."

The country has but little changed in the course of a century. The ruins of Capability Brown's exploits are still traceable at Weston; the square tower of Clifton still looks down upon the spire of Olney; there is still a clump of poplars at Laven-don Mill; there is still a wealth of flowering rushes with their cherry-scented blossoms, of broad-leaved plants varying the monotony of the reeds, of purple loose-strife, of blue forget-me-not. An adventurous holiday-maker, who could for a couple of days forego the delights of dusty roads and the rushing wheel, might find a less agreeable pastime than a voyage in a canoe from Newport Pagnell down to Turvey. Thus he might bathe himself in the atmosphere which was breathed by no mean English poet, gliding beneath hills clothed with trees, or between wide meadows; but he would do well not to surrender himself unguardedly to the calm pleasures of plain-sailing, lest he should rue his error lost in the mazes of a reed-bed. Failing this adventure, his events will be the scream and flash of a kingfisher, or the sulky croak of a heron disturbed in his meal of freshwater mussels.

From Turvey to Bedford the journey is well enough for a while, but he must, indeed, be fond of waterways who does not weary of those sevenfold wanderings of the river below Sharnbrook; and yet these also are sacred to the memory of a poet. It was here that Edward Fitzgerald used to dream and fish. Omar Khayyam and Cowper meet upon the Ouse.

J. C. TARVER.

THE CAMPAIGN OF DOUAI

CHAPTER XVII.

WHEN the firing referred to in our last chapter broke out, Sir Charles Browne and his Staff walked up to the high ground on the eastern side of the hollow to find out what was going on; and when Walter saw his Chief and Nugent follow their example he rose from the ground and joined them.

When he reached the top of the plateau he was able to form some idea of the situation. From where he stood, above Fauquembergues, the ground gradually rose on his right hand (to the south, that is to say, as he naturally was facing eastward), and along this high ground was a line of guns stretching away as far as he could see. The guns were withdrawn from the crest so far as to be just able to fire over it, being themselves thus greatly screened from the view of the enemy on the other side of the valley. On the lower ground in their rear stood the limbers and waggons; a continual stream of gunners running backwards and forwards with ammunition testified to the rapidity of the fire, if further testimony were needed than the incessant reports blending into one continuous roar. The enemy's guns on the far side of the valley were firing with great fury, but with little effect, most of their shells bursting harmlessly high in the air in rear of our guns, which they obviously had not yet succeeded in accurately locating. The positions which our troops had occupied during the night-attack had been everywhere abandoned.

Doubtless when the time came to resist the advance of the French, they would be re-occupied; meanwhile our men were lying down in the shelter afforded by the Bois Quartier, by the village of Audine-thun, and by some hollows running almost parallel to the front along the road between the last-named village and Fauquembergues. A depression, running for some little distance along the road between Fauquembergues and Fruges, also gave cover to a large force of infantry, who were in a very safe position, though in rear of the guns in action, owing to the steepness of the sheltering slopes; projectiles which missed the guns must inevitably pass harmless over their heads. Walter was surprised to see that the narrow-gauge railway connecting Fauquembergues and Fruges was being utilised by the defence, as, while he watched, a long train came puffing round the corner beyond Renty, stopped in the valley below him, and disgorged masses of grey-clad infantry. Though only a mile off, he found that without his glass they were practically invisible thanks to their campaigning uniforms. So soon as they began to march, moving in a long column along the banks of the Aa, the dust betrayed them; but when stationary no one would have suspected their existence. Over Renty a balloon was flying, from which an observer would be able to detect any movement of French troops into the valley of the Lys in ample time to allow of our infantry occupying the trenches with

which they had seamed the slopes covering that valley. Over the French guns was also floating a balloon, and from this the effects of their fire was doubtless being observed. So far as an artillery-position pure and simple was concerned, the French had much the best of it. Their guns were posted along a commanding ridge, not unlike the Hog's Back near Aldershot, on the opposite side of the valley above the villages of Reclinghem and Vinely. They were withdrawn from the crest, like ours, and the only way in which they could be located was by the faint flickers of light which any one armed with a powerful glass could see above the crest of the ridge. This ridge was rather higher than the more extended gun-position of the British, and was about a mile or more in length, but was very wanting in depth, a feature which greatly aided our gunners, making the task of obtaining a correct range much easier. No troops were visible anywhere to the eastward, nor was dust to be seen rising, as would have been the case if columns were on the march. Except for the terrific concussion of the artillery-fire all was still.

"They don't seem to be getting much forrarder with all this waste of ammunition," said Walter, as, after a careful look round him, he took up his position beside Nugent.

"Well," was the reply, "you can't tell what *our* guns are doing, and the French will get the range directly I expect. I think our chaps must be satisfied with their range, as I've not seen them make any alterations since we came. With this new quick-firer, once you get it well anchored and the range fixed, you can fire a lot of rounds without making any alterations in your laying. These guns seem to be as steady as rocks. They

can fight eight rounds a minute with them now, so a gunner told me the other day, with a well-trained detachment, that is to say. By Jove," he went on, "it looks as if this was going to be the critical point of the fight after all; here's the Commander-in-Chief, and Sir Arthur Jocelyn too. I've seen nothing of him since we landed."

Walter glanced round in the direction in which Nugent was looking, and saw the Commander-in-Chief and his Staff, together with the General in command of the Second Corps, riding slowly up the hill-side from Renty. Nearing the summit all dismounted, and walked across the fields towards where General Browne and his Staff were watching the progress of the fight. For some moments the Staffs stood chatting in one large cluster, forming a large and conspicuous group in their blue clothing, a fact of which they were sternly reminded by the quick bursting in unpleasant proximity of a number of shrapnel. The dust flew in clouds all round them, but strange to say no one was hurt. One hint of this kind was enough, and the officers of the Staff were quickly ordered to move into the hollow sheltering the Sixth Division, with the exception of one or two whose services were required by the Field-Marshal. Walter and Nugent had to leave their point of vantage with the other officers, and sat down again in the hollow, trying to wait unconcernedly for what the day might bring forth. "You see," said Nugent, "the enemy weren't long in spotting the blue uniforms, even at that distance. If the Staff had only been dressed like anybody else, they might have stayed there as long as they liked."

In the hollow all lay in silence for some time. The squadron of Hussars attached to the Division had now

entered it, coming from the direction of Fauquembergues, and were standing by their horses. The gunners were fussing round their guns, and in some of the infantry battalions fresh ammunition was being issued; in the others the men were sitting by their arms, listening to the roar of the cannonade. After some half an hour or so of this Walter was surprised to see Fitzgerald re-enter the hollow, this time without his bicycle. He came and sat down beside our friend. "Well, what news?" asked Walter.

"From my point of view the most important news is that my wheel is eternally smashed. A shrapnel bullet caught it fair on the front sprocket wheel, and sent it flying out of my hand into a thousand pieces. From your point of view, the most important is that your gunners are having a very rough time of it above."

"Why, they weren't suffering at all when I was looking at them some time ago."

"They are suffering enough now," said Fitzgerald gravely. "I don't think I'm a particularly nervous person, but I concluded that if I wanted to see New York again I had better light out from up there; so I lit. A live journalist's better than a dead donkey. They're sticking to it like men, and they're slating the French well, so the man in the balloon says. They have a telephone to the balloon, and the man in it tells them exactly what the French are doing. Your chaps got the range first, it appears, and had a fine time for a bit; but the French have the range now, and are sweeping the ground above in style with their shrapnel."

"Surely we must have put some of their guns out of action, if we were the first to get the range?"

"Why, certainly, you may have done so, but they've enough guns

in action to give you some trouble yet."

"What's it like up there?" asked Walter.

"What's it like? Well, it would be a commonplace remark to say it's like hell, but that's the nearest simile occurs to me at present. I tell you what it looks like. The whole of the ground on which the guns are standing is one great whirlpool of dust driving in every direction. There's not enough wind to blow it away, and it hangs in a regular yellow cloud over everything, like one of your London fogs. Through this you can see, dimly, mind you, guns overturned, men and horses struggling on the ground, and your gunners, many of them stripped to the waist, working like demons. The noise is awful. Your Field-Marshal is standing up there like a graven image. He's out of the direct line of the fire, but if I was an insurance-agent I'd give no risks on him."

"What about the infantry?"

"Oh, their turn's not come yet; they're lying snug enough now."

While they were talking General Browne came running down the slope into the hollow. There was at once a restless stir through all the Division; surely something was coming now. In a hoarse voice the General called for officers commanding brigades and battalions, and in a moment these were grouped in front of him, as he stood, map in hand, the perspiration streaming from his florid face, the dust caked thickly on his coarse moustache. He looked quickly round the little circle. "Gentlemen," he said, "our turn is coming now. The enemy are about to attempt to envelope our left flank, and we are to put a stop to it. The Fifth Division, which is already at Cl  ty, is to co-operate. The Eleventh Brigade will at once move into Fauquembergues, and will be conveyed by rail to Ouve Wirquin,

about four miles up the valley. Two trains are waiting; you must put two battalions in each, and those for whom there isn't room must march. The Twelfth Brigade and mounted troops, with the mounted scouts of both Brigades, will move from Fauquembergues via Avroult. The cavalry and mounted scouts will cover the advance. At Cléty our action will be guided by circumstances. The ammunition-carts and column will move by the road, as will the ambulances; the rest of the divisional transport will remain here till further orders. Is that quite clear? Well then, move at once."

In a moment all was bustle and excitement. The Eleventh Brigade were the first to get away, being nearest to the road, and were soon moving at a steady run down the hill into Fauquembergues to where the trains were waiting for them. The Highlanders and Rifles now led the Twelfth Brigade; then came the three batteries of the divisional artillery, followed by the Cumberland Regiment, the Fusiliers bringing up the rear. The Hussars and the mounted scouts of all the infantry battalions of the Division, these latter numbering forty-eight men in all, left the high road, and moved at a trot across the fields towards the north, the Hussars spreading out like a fan in front, the mounted riflemen moving in rear in two compact bodies.

Walter now found himself riding with the officers of the Divisional Staff, his Brigadier riding alongside the Divisional Commander. The road they were following led them past the outskirts of Fauquembergues, the streets of which were crowded with transport in the most terrible confusion. As the column turned off to the north Walter was able to get a glance down the long and crowded street. A straggling row of heavy waggons was almost blocking it, some turned one way,

some another, the drivers shouting at their horses and at each other; officers of the Army Service Corps were running about like men distracted, their hands full of papers; horsemen and cyclists were worming their way through the press, fatigue-parties were unloading stores of every description, and a string of white-tilted ambulances, struggling to force a passage through the throng, added to the tumult, to which the continuous roar of the cannonade formed a fitting bass accompaniment.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WALTER was glad to get out of it all, and rode off with a light heart towards the unknown. The road led them at first along the bank of the Aa, and was one of those fine poplar-lined causeways for which France has such a high reputation. The men, elated at the prospect of a brush with the enemy, strode along at a good four miles an hour, in spite of the fierce sun, and the heavy dust which the southerly wind carried along with the column. As the road wound away from the valley, and the pace slackened as the men breasted the hill, loud cheers from the valley they had quitted made all look round in time to see the train with the leading battalions of the Eleventh Brigade, the men crowded into open trucks, puffing along towards its destination. The men of the Twelfth Brigade were eager to return the cheer, but their exuberance was quickly checked by their officers, for fear of the sound reaching ears for which it was not intended. Before the head of the column entering Avroult lost sight of the railway, the second train was seen rattling slowly with its precious load after its predecessor.

Like the rest of the villages through which Walter had passed,

Avrout appeared to be almost deserted by its inhabitants, who had probably taken refuge under the guns of the fortress of St. Omer, which lay some eighteen miles to the north. A few scowling old women stood at their doors as the troops strode past, one or two old men shook their fists in impotent rage at the invader, but the bulk of the inhabitants had fled, leaving their houses locked and shuttered behind them. Walter thought it probable that some of the fugitives had carried news of the flank movement of the British to the enemy, but Nugent reassured him on this point. "It is quite possible," he said, "that people may have gone from here to the French lines last night, up to midnight, say, but since the firing began this morning you may be quite certain that our cavalry have let no one through. All this flank has been very closely watched, ever since we landed in fact, but more carefully if anything since this movement was decided on. Bye-the-bye," he went on, "one of these fellows" (with a gesture towards Sir Charles Browne's Staff) "has just told me how we got a clue to the movement of the French in this direction, —the movement which we are about to foil, if we can. It was rather neat. The Engineers flew one of those light captive balloons fitted with the new automatic photographic apparatus over this flank this morning, the balloon, which was quite a small one, being empty of course. They got some half dozen negatives which they developed, but the prints showed nothing of any consequence; so they took a print on celluloid and threw it on a screen, like a lantern-slide, you know, and then they noticed that some of the roads leading north-west from the French position were obliterated in some manner. Another negative gave a better result,

and they found then that it was dust, and that these roads were crowded with troops, obviously marching to envelope our left and drive us in a southerly direction away from our German friends, and of course from our communications. However this little game will be knocked on the head now."

"How was it that our cavalry did not find this out?" asked Walter. "If they were in touch as they should have been, surely they should have got an inkling of something?"

"The French were too strong for them on that flank. That was what first drew the attention of our chaps to the probability of something going on; it was clear they had something to hide."

As the column moved steadily on, the men sweating under the blistering sun, their mouths parched with the heat and dust, the cannonade behind them still rumbled on without intermission, now bursting forth into a greater fury, and now almost dying away, but never ceasing its threatening accompaniment to their march. As they neared Cléty Walter looked out for some sign of the Fifth Division, which was supposed to be in that neighbourhood, but none could be seen anywhere. All this time the front and right flank of the column had been guarded by the squadron of Hussars and the handful of mounted riflemen, moving warily along the higher ground, peering eagerly into the blue haze screening the distant view, through which all momentarily expected to see the shimmer of hostile arms. As Walter was watching curiously the movements of these well-trained scouts, he saw a large body of cavalry join them, falling slowly back from behind a belt of fir-trees which fringed for a distance of a mile or so the line of rising ground on the east of the marching

infantry. This cavalry, he concluded, must be a portion of the mounted troops to whom the safety of the British left had been entrusted. For a few minutes they remained halted, then the new-comers moved rapidly off to the northward, taking a course along the side of the hill so as to be hidden from the view of an enemy, and one individual, separating himself from his fellows, came at speed towards the column. Something had evidently been seen, and many eyes watched the horseman as he raced across the dried-up stubbles, the dust rising in white spurts from under his horse's feet. As he came closer, Walter saw that he was an officer of Hussars, superbly mounted on a fine chestnut horse whose swinging stride showed his racing blood. As he came up to the head of the column, he reined up his horse by Sir Charles Browne, and it was plain from his excited gestures, and the manner in which he pointed in the direction of the high ground he had just quitted, that some important intelligence had been obtained. His message delivered, the Hussar gave his horse the rein, and galloped back again to his command.

The General rode for a few moments in consultation with his chief Staff-Officer, a map spread over his wallets in front of him, and then, raising his arm, signalled a halt. At once the steady tramp of the marching men was stilled, the dust slowly settled to the ground, and the soldiers, some wiping the sweat from their brows, some fanning themselves with their wide-brimmed hats, stood in silence, watching the movements of the General as he spoke to his Staff, or straining their eyes in the direction in which the distant scouts could be faintly distinguished through the quivering haze. The head of the column had reached the cross-roads

a few hundred yards from Cléty, and the leading files of the Eleventh Brigade were now to be seen swinging up the hill from Ouve Wirquin, where they had quitted the train. Dohem lay on a hill-side little more than half a mile to the east, the heights beyond being fringed with clumps of trees and patches of woodland, into which the scouts had disappeared. General Browne was not long in making his plans. In a very few minutes Staff-Officers were galloping off to the different units, and, in obedience to the orders they carried, the Twelfth Brigade now moved in a long line towards the high ground over Dohem, followed at a little distance by the Eleventh, which formed column and moved in echelon in rear of the left flank of the leading line. As soon as the Highlanders and Rifles had cleared the road, the guns moved off at a trot towards Cléty, but Walter noticed that they turned to the right before reaching that village, and he quickly understood that, like the infantry, they were destined for the heights above Dohem. Sir Charles and his staff followed the Twelfth Brigade, moving in a group in rear of its centre, General Hippiusley, Walter, and Nugent riding a little to their left.

They had not moved far across the parched surface of the fields when the General appeared to get uneasy and trotted on with his Staff to Dohem, soon disappearing from view behind one of the clumps of trees on top of the hill. He was scarcely out of sight when one of his Staff reappeared on the hill-side, with a mounted signaller who at once began to work his flag rapidly. "The brigade is to advance as rapidly as possible," came the message, and even as it was delivered to General Hippiusley the carbines of the Hussars and the rifles of the mounted scouts began to crack along the heights above. The Brigadier, followed by

Nugent and Walter, trotted through the line, and the signal *to double* was passed along the front. There was a muffled cheer, and the long grey line broke at once into a steady run, the mules and ammunition-waggons clattering behind. Over Dohem they swept like a torrent, the line breaking up for the moment into little groups which wormed their way between the houses, across the dusty high road, and reformed in the fields on the further side. Up the steep slope they pressed, spurred on by the rapid musketry crackling overhead. As the infantry burst across the deserted street of Dohem, the guns entered it from the northern end, the horses at a gallop, the drivers using their whips, the whole enveloped in a very hurricane of dust. Passing through the village the guns were halted at the foot of the ascent, while their officers, galloping to the top, looked round for a position from which their fire could be given with effect.

As Walter reached the summit of the slope, he saw the horses of the Hussars and scouts standing in groups behind the little woods already alluded to; within these woods were their riders, from whose weapons came the rapid fire which they had heard. These woods were both more numerous and more extensive than Walter had supposed from his map and from what he had seen from the lower level, and quite interfered with his view in the direction from which the enemy were presumably to be expected. An officer of the Divisional Staff signed to the Brigadier that the infantry were to enter the woods, and as the line, the men now almost breathless after their long run, reached the top of the hill, each portion of it, resuming the ordinary marching pace, moved quickly into the shadows of the wood which happened to be directly opposite to it. Round the corner of one

of these copses now came trotting Sir Charles Browne and his suite, and as they did so the Hussars and scouts of the infantry battalions came running out of the woods to their horses, their faces flushed and excited; they mounted and rode swiftly away to the north-east, moving down into the hollow as though to escape observation, a few scouts galloping on ahead. Sir Charles signed to General Hippisley to dismount, both he and his Staff setting the example, and in another moment all were standing listening in silence. Walter was dying with curiosity to see what was going on in front, and his Brigadier and Nugent were equally anxious, but after Sir Charles's peremptory signal they thought it wiser to stay where they were. After a moment, during which nothing was to be heard except the continual dull booming of guns to the south, Sir Charles vouchsafed some information. "A large force of the enemy are crossing the river at Théroutanne," he said. "Our scouts were firing at their cavalry who have now withdrawn into a hollow some six or seven hundred yards off. They may all come on and attack us here, where we have an excellent defensive position, except that there is cover up to within about six hundred yards of it in places." The General unfolded his map and threw it on the ground, where one of his aides spread it out, placing a stone on each corner to keep it steady. All the Staff crowded round, and the General went on. "You see where we are? There is no possible artillery-position for the enemy on this side of the stream, and we are on far the most commanding ground. The idea of the enemy, who are in force, is probably to move to Lumbres, or in that direction, till they are astride of the ridge with each flank resting on the rivers Aa and Lys, and then to move in a

southerly direction rolling us up. Fortunately the Fifth Division must be somewhere in their path. As soon as they are engaged with them, I shall fall on their flank; if they attack us first, the Fifth will make the counter-attack, so I think we ought to be able to manage to delay them, or rather to hold them in check."

The Colonel in command of the artillery was the first to break the silence following the General's explanation. "I suppose, sir," he said, "you will wish me to keep my guns out of sight, for the present, till the enemy's plans develop a bit? I have an excellent position on the left here, if we have to fire to the north or east; if we have to fire to the south-east, we shall have to place our guns on our present right. Meanwhile we are busy taking all ranges."

The General nodded. "Keep a sharp look out," was his answer, "and get in the first shot, if you can; you may get an excellent target at their columns. If you wish to go round the front of your brigade, General Hippisley, now is your time; but keep under cover." This was sufficient permission, and the Brigadier, followed by Walter and Nugent, at once entered the nearest wood and pushed forward to its northern boundary.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE wood was delightfully cool and shady after the glare and heat outside, and the Rifles who lined its northern edge were enjoying the rest after their hot and dusty march. The men were lying down about a pace apart along the edge of the wood nearest to Théroutanne, the red-tiled roofs of which could be dimly seen about two miles away in the valley, dimly because of the heavy

dust-clouds of the marching columns which must have been passing through it, and also because of the haze caused by the intense heat. Within about half a mile of where the Rifles were lying the slopes were clothed by the dark foliage of the Bois d'Enfer, the wood which on the previous evening had at one time been occupied by the British outposts. Between this wood and the Rifles stretched fields covered with the shiny foliage of the sugar-beet, its leaves now grey with dust, and nearer still, in fact within some few yards of the wood occupied by the British, were a few high-roofed farm-houses, surrounded with the outbuildings and straggling enclosures usual in the district. In the courtyard of the nearest building stood a weeping and indignant group of women with great bundles in their hands, who were being sent down to Dohem in order to be out of the way in case of an attack. The occupants of the other farms joined them, as Walter was watching, headed by a few riflemen, and the whole party, the women pouring out a string of shrill-voiced lamentations, shuffled slowly off towards Dohem, throwing as they went many backward glances at the homes they were leaving. "Poor devils," said the Brigadier, "war is not amusing to them! When they come back they will probably find that their friends' artillery has laid their homes in ruins. It's unfortunate that those buildings are there; they have to be held, as they rather mask the fire of some of the woods, but they will be untenable after a couple of minutes of artillery-fire."

Meanwhile the Rifles were working energetically at putting the farms into a state of defence. The windows were being filled up with bedding, walls were being loopholed, and a large party was pumping vigorously

to fill all available vessels with water to be at hand in case of fire. Even while thus busily employed care was taken to keep out of sight of any possible enemy in the Bois d'Enfer or its neighbourhood; the men working in the courtyards ran to and fro in stooping positions, their coats off, their sleeves rolled up to the elbows. Pick and spade were plied with tremendous energy, and clouds of dust and mortar flew from the old buildings. The Brigadier shook his head. "Wasted energy I'm afraid, Nugent," he said, "wasted energy!"

Nugent made no reply, and, quitting the spot from which they had been observing these operations, the little group moved on along the line.

While they were picking their way through the tripping undergrowth, a sudden stir among the men lying near attracted their attention. They had evidently seen something, and following the direction of their glances, Walter and his Brigadier saw three French dragoons moving at a walking pace towards their position from a hollow on the north side of the Bois d'Enfer, probably the hollow into which the cavalry had retired when fired on by the British scouts. The troopers rode some twenty paces apart, the sun flashing on their steel helmets as they turned their heads this way and that, peering in every direction for the enemy which had been firing at them; their carbines were held poised in readiness, and the three figures in their old-fashioned crested helmets, their baggy scarlet overalls, perched up on the high military saddles cumbered with a miscellaneous assortment of equipment, looked very picturesque objects as they moved across the fields of beet, whose luxurious foliage came up to their horses' knees. The British watched them in silence. After walking and peering round them in the fashion just described for

a few moments, seeing nothing to alarm them, they broke into a trot, and were soon followed from the hollow by a larger body, which Walter mentally estimated to be about a squadron. The whole came jogging towards the British lines with much jingling and clattering of swords and mess-tins; the riflemen, watching their advance themselves unseen, were fidgeting with their weapons, when something apparently betrayed the situation of the British, and in an instant the dragoons had wheeled about and were galloping for the shelter they had just quitted, but not fast enough to escape a scattering fire of musketry, which on Walter's left took a heavy toll of the retiring cavalry. Scarcely had the horsemen regained their shelter when the attention of all was attracted by a heavy outburst of firing from the farms held by the Rifles and from the plantations beyond. The cause was at once apparent. From the shadows of the Bois d'Enfer leaped a dense line of red-trousered infantry, visible only for a moment ere they disappeared in the hollow between it and the British position. As they disappeared, another line, equally dense and equally rapid in its movements, gave a brief target to the concealed marksmen. A moment more, and the leading line reached the southern limit of the hollow which had concealed them, and throwing themselves down on their faces in the dusty leaves of the beet opened a heavy fire in a swift succession of regular volleys into the woods held by the British. The range was short, only some five hundred yards, and in an instant the storm of bullets was crashing through the trees, stripping off leaves and branches in showers round the defenders, many of whom were killed and wounded at the first fire. The French infantry were also to be seen

further off swarming among the houses of the little village of Upen d'Aval close to the Bois d'Enfer, and more were also visible pushing their way rapidly upwards from the valley of the Lys.

At the first outbreak General Hippley and his little Staff withdrew a few paces further into the wood, striving with their glasses to gauge the situation so far as it was possible. "This is a serious attack, Nugent," said the Brigadier; "our chaps will have to work hard to hold their own. Desmond, go to the rear and tell Sir Charles that we are attacked in force."

Walter turned and departed on his mission, running and stumbling through the tangled undergrowth, the crashing noise of the musketry ringing in his ears. As he ran the bullets sang round his head, shredding leaves and small branches in showers round him. Many men who had been hit were painfully making their way to the rear. Here was one leaning against a tree, his face white as death, resting his head on one arm, the other arm, darkly stained with blood, hanging useless by his side; he smiled faintly as Walter hurried past. A little further on a man was seated with his back against a sapling, bare-headed, his face livid, his eyes closed, his breath coming in gasps, a faint red froth gathering on his lips; he had been shot through the lungs. Men of the bearer-company were working hard in their efforts to remove the wounded to the nearest dressing-station, a duty which was fully as dangerous as that allotted to the fighting-line itself. As Walter hurried on mechanically, suddenly a tremendous outburst of firing almost deafened him. The British guns had opened simultaneously from both sides of the wood. An officer in the blue uniform of the Staff hastening to the

front met Walter and, approaching his lips to his ear, shouted, "An attack in force?" Walter nodded. "I've been sent to see what's going on. You are on your way to the General?" Walter nodded again. "Very well; tell him I'll be back immediately." The officer hurried on, and as Walter emerged into the brilliant sunlight in rear of the wood he met the reserve companies of the battalions making their way to the front. The ammunition-carriers were crowding round the mules getting their bags filled with cartridges; the carts with the ammunition-reserve were standing in readiness, and the officer in charge was busy getting some boxes opened so as to be prepared for any sudden demand on his resources. The Eleventh Brigade, which had been halted on the slopes leading down to Dohem, was now marching in a northerly direction, keeping carefully below the crest-line. A quick moving fringe of scouts was spread along the undulating ground in their front, behind moved a maxim-battery, the guns pulled by powerful mules, and the ammunition-waggons, with a couple of white-tilted ambulances, brought up the rear.

The Staff was grouped on the slope between the woods and Dohem, out of the way of the busy bullets which seemed to be whispering through the air on every side. Someone had brought a chair and table out of one of the houses near; and at this table, on which a map was spread, was sitting the General. Behind him some Sappers had just erected a station for wireless telegraphy, which was to connect the Sixth Division with the main body of the English; the instruments were apparently in readiness, and a Sapper was seated at his little table prepared to begin work. Walter ran down the slope and gave his message, but the General

took little notice of him ; in fact the reality of the attack must have been tolerably apparent to everyone there without any further information. The crash and thunder of the firing, the constant stream of wounded to the ambulances on the hill-side, the incessant humming of the bullets passing overhead, were quite sufficient to convince anyone that the enemy were in force and were pushing their attack with energy.

Sir Charles studied his map for some moments in silence. "Every division should have a balloon-equipment," he said at last to an officer standing beside him ; "one to an army-corps is not enough. I would give a good deal to know where the French guns are." Then turning to Walter he added : "Go back to your General ; tell him he must hold on ; I can give him no support."

Walter saluted and hastened back to his post. As he approached the front, it seemed to him that the fire of the French was less rapid than before ; the crashes of the volleys came slower, and a larger proportion of the bullets seemed to go high. However, it was still severe enough, and Walter found himself unconsciously dodging from tree to tree between the volleys. He met the Staff-Officer again, this time returning from the front, and a blood-stained handkerchief bound round one wrist showed that he had not come off scatheless. He smiled gaily as he recognised the young aide-de-camp, and shouted, as they passed each other, "They run, they run !"

"Splendid !" was Walter's reply, as he pushed forward, peering now to right and left for a sight of his General. As he reached the northern edge of the wood, and was again able to see the beet-covered fields and the dark trees from which the French had issued, he saw him and Nugent

seated below a fir-tree. Nugent had his glasses to his eyes, and was carefully scanning the French position ; the Brigadier was leaning back with a cynical smile on his face, a half-smoked cigar between his teeth. Walter gave his message, and sat down beside Nugent. "We can hold on easily enough," said General Hippley. "Our fellows' shooting is wonderful, eh, Nugent ?"

"I never saw anything like it," was the answer. "Every Frenchman who showed his head over the ridge got a couple of bullets through it in half a second."

Walter pulled out his glasses and looked along the front. Scarlet patches, showing through the glossy leaves of the beet, marked where bolder spirits among the French had fallen in an endeavour to advance. On the hill-side towards Théroutanne he could see a number of dark blots which puzzled him. He asked Nugent what they were. "Oh, those are guns," was the answer. "It was just after you had left, before our guns opened, that they tried to bring artillery out from behind those houses. It was a rash attempt within eight hundred yards of men who can shoot like our chaps, and with a maxim battery too to play on them. In half a second the guns were swept with bullets, half the men and horses were killed, and the remainder were only too glad to escape with their lives behind the wood. Some more guns were brought up on their right, but they also were spotted before they could unlimber and were driven back."

The British artillery were now firing much more slowly than before. They had substituted incendiary shells for the shrapnel they had previously been using, and the effect of these shells was to be seen in the blue curls of smoke drifting round the tree-tops

of the wood from which the French were still firing slow and random volleys. The noise of the bursting shells could be plainly heard by the British, who could also see the brilliant white flashes, sharply illuminating for an instant the dark recesses in which the enemy lay concealed. Our rifle-fire had slackened also. Where the flashes of the exploding shells showed signs of the enemy, there was at once directed a shower of bullets; but for this the riflemen lay motionless, their heated weapons in their hands, their keen eyes fixed on the position where their enemy lay hidden. The farm-houses in which the riflemen were posted were still occupied, and the occupants were taking advantage of the lull in the fight to quench their thirst at the pumps in the court-yards, running to and fro, stooping as they ran, many of them still in their shirt-sleeves as when the fight had suddenly begun.

CHAPTER XX.

DURING this comparative lull heavy firing suddenly broke out away to the north. At first nothing but the crisp crackle of rifles, accentuated by the bark of the French volleys, was to be heard, but after a little the roar of artillery dominated the rattle of the musketry and seemed to grow in violence and intensity every minute. "That's the Fifth Division having a cut in," ejaculated the Brigadier; "we are attacking them on both sides now, it strikes me."

"Yes, but in inferior numbers, sir," answered Nugent.

"Inferior be damned!" said General Hippisley with vigour. "There's no question of inferiority when our men can do more killing with ten bullets than they can with a hundred." After slight pause the Brigadier went on: "Their machine-guns were the only

things which really hurt us much in this wood. It was while you were away," he added, turning to Walter; "they must have had them hidden somewhere and, by Jove, they peppered us properly for a few minutes. Then our men seemed to get on to them somehow, and all of a sudden they stopped."

"The gunners claim the credit for that, sir," said Nugent.

"Ah, they can claim what they like; I believe it was our riflemen. By Heavens, the rifle is the queen of weapons; in the hands of a man who can use it, that is to say. Hark to that firing now; I would bet that the enemy are losing a dozen men for every one of ours. By Jove, they're plucky devils; here they come again, to certain death!"

As he spoke the languishing fire of the British suddenly blazed forth anew with tremendous energy as a torrent of French infantry came once again pouring out from the doubtful shelter of the now smouldering wood. They appeared to roll from the smoke-obscured shadows into the hollow like a living flood, which in another instant had lapped up to the ridge on the southern side of the depression, whence a hurricane of shot was poured once more on the British position. For some instants a fierce duel raged across the shimmering fields of beet, the guns of the invaders adding their roar to the din of the rifles, which reverberated in deafening concussions through the wood. Very fortunately for the British the bulk of the French fire seemed to go high, stripping the trees of their branches and causing a perfect rain of splinters and small twigs to fall upon the riflemen lying below. For a few seconds this rifle fire was all the British had to endure, but suddenly a brilliant flash, lighting up the shadows of the wood and

accompanied by a terrific explosion, announced that artillery was about to take a part in the fight on the side of the French. The first shell was followed by many more, bursting with hideous crashes in quick succession somewhat in rear of the enemy's firing-line. The Brigadier and Nugent swept the French positions vainly with their glasses trying to locate the batteries which were annoying them. "They must have their guns either in the hollow behind the Bois d'Enfer, or somewhere else out of sight," shouted the General at last, his mouth close to Nugent's ear.

"Yes, it's clearly high-angle fire," screamed Nugent in reply; "they've probably taken the range off the map. It's an infernal nuisance; I don't see how our fellows are going to place them."

For a few moments the Brigadier and his little Staff sat listening to the tempest raging round them, anxiously looking for some sign of slackening in the continuous fire of the French. At length General Hippisley rose and, throwing away the smouldering end of his cigar, began to walk slowly along the line, a pace or two in its rear, Nugent and Walter following at his heels. With set and determined faces the defenders of the wood continued to fire wherever the clustering *képis* of their foe offered a fair target. After the first terrific outburst, when the French lines had quitted the wood, the fire of the British had perceptibly slackened; this, however, was not due to any weakening on their part, but merely to the fact that their training had made them averse to firing unless a fair target could be clearly seen. With the French, on the other hand, the case was very different. Their crowded lines were halted on the edge of the depression already mentioned, the men lying

down on their faces and in great part screened from their enemy's view by the rank growth of the beet; this, however, also hid the enemy from their view, regardless of which they continued to pour volley after volley into the wood sheltering the British. As a natural consequence the vast majority of their shots whistled over their opponents' heads, wasting their fury on the tree-tops. Every now and then General Hippisley halted and watched the progress of the struggle, and more than once Walter, as he scrutinised the French position through his glasses, saw how the well-directed fire of our men at once swept away any of the enemy who ventured to show themselves.

As they, Walter and his General, thus walked slowly along the line, they found themselves at length in rear of the farmhouses occupied by detachments of the Border Rifles. From the loop-holed walls of these farms the Rifles were fiercely plying the French with their fire. Standing as they were behind walls, they had a better view of their enemy than the troops lying in the wood, and hence their fire was far more effective. For some minutes the Brigadier stood watching them. Dust was flying in every direction from the walls, already in some places beginning to crumble under the sustained fire of the French. Round the pumps in the farm-yards were clustered groups of stooping soldiers, trying to cool the smoking rifles of the men at the loop-holes, who used meanwhile the weapons of their comrades in reserve. Across these yards also crawled many wounded, dragging themselves painfully to the stouter shelter of the solid buildings. While Walter watched, a French shell struck fairly on the gable of one of the larger houses, exploding with a violence that made his heart stand still for a

moment, and sending beams, stones, and rubbish of every description flying in all directions. A second shell followed almost instantly upon the first, completing the ruin, and directly afterwards flames began to lick stealthily out of the windows and from the yawning gaps in the roof. The men who had been firing from the upper story now came tumbling in confusion from doorway and window, throwing themselves down hastily under the shelter of the walls of the yard, some remaining huddled in this shelter, others showing a bolder spirit in desperate and futile attempts to quench the flames with the tubs of water placed in readiness.

While this was going on, the French shells continued to fall among the blazing ruins, and more shells lighting on the other buildings near quickly had them blazing too. Clouds of black smoke rose from the conflagration, spreading like a pall across the beet-fields and driving in dark swirls and eddies into the faces of the defenders of the wood. Through this canopy now came leaping the breathless men who had been holding the farms, racing to covert wildly, shielded from the French fire by the thick smoke. As they came bounding through the smoke General Hippisley signed to Nugent and Walter to stop and rally them, a task which they succeeded in performing without any difficulty as soon as they had reached the comparative shelter of the wood. Nearly all wounded, breathless, smoke-begrimed, and furious at their discomfiture, they presented a sorry spectacle, and, some thirty in all, were but a miserable remnant of the two fine companies which had been originally stationed in the farms. All their officers had been killed or wounded apparently, but the din was so deafening that any attempt at questioning them was impossible. While Nugent

and Walter were restoring order among the first of the fugitives, more began to arrive through the smoke, and the reason for their delay was quickly plain, as each one of them bore on his shoulders a wounded comrade. In this way some dozen more were accounted for, and among them Walter found two subalterns severely wounded, both young lads, and both quite unconscious.

The Brigadier had now moved a little further on to avoid the smoke-clouds which interfered with his view, and, hastily directing the wounded to the rear, Walter and Nugent ran to join their Chief. Just as they did so, the French, emboldened probably by the ruin of the farms and by the consequent slackening of the British fire, rose from their shelter and, with shrill cries and loud blowing of bugles, advanced rapidly on the British position, the men in front firing as they ran. The movement was clearly a preconcerted one, the whole line rising at once and running forward more in a dense swarm than in any regular formation. For an instant the British fire almost ceased, the officers blowing their whistles loudly to control the eagerness of their men. The French masses came swiftly on, the long bayonets glittering in the sun, the men in front continuing to fire without cessation, all cheering wildly. Only for an instant did they advance unmolested. Then with a crash the tempest of fire broke upon them, the hail of rifle-bullets striking them in front, the shrapnel raking them from either flank. No troops on earth could have stood up against that storm. In less than half a minute the whistles of the British officers were again blowing shrilly; the fire slackened, then stopped; the enemy was gone! Instead of the advancing masses charging with fury and determination, the eye now saw

only the grey-green fields of beet, through which the blue and scarlet clothing of the fallen French seemed in the further distance to blend into purple and crimson streaks marking the ridge from which the advance had been made. From these crimson patches, for a minute or two after the firing had stopped, men rose unsteadily here and there, and staggered with uncertain steps into the hollow to which the survivors had again retired. No one fired at these men. Here and there, also, men ran out from the shelter of the hollow, sometimes waving a white rag as they ran, and from the prostrate figures chose whom they sought, bearing him tenderly back to shelter. The Brigadier cleared his throat once or twice, then turned to Nugent and Walter. "That proves what I've always maintained," he said, "that it's suicide to advance within five hundred yards of decent infantry so long as they've got their wits about them."

"It was very plucky, sir," said Walter.

"Plucky! Of course it was plucky, but you want a little more than that to win against men who can shoot like these. Deuce take it, the artillery are at us again! We can't stay here much longer if these woods catch fire."

As he spoke the loud and frequent crashes among the trees behind them, each crash accompanied by a flash of exceeding brilliancy, announced that the artillery-fire of the French had recommenced. The shells fortunately were falling too far in rear of the line to do much damage, but these terrific explosions were decidedly shaking to the nerves, and an additional danger now menaced the British in the fire which came licking along the ground in the dry and brittle undergrowth, seizing on the smaller branches, leaping from tree to tree over the heads

of the soldiers, and sending forth clouds of pungent smoke, whose acrid fumes seemed to gather and cling among the trunks. The wood into which the French had now again retreated seemed to be very much in the same condition, the incendiary shells of the British artillery having had an instant effect on the dry and resinous fir-trees, among which the flames could now be seen rising. Unfortunately for the British the wind was from the south, and, though light, it made their position every moment more precarious. General Hippisley stood looking into the recesses of the wood behind him, wondering how long he could hold his position, which he had been ordered to maintain at all hazards. "If this wood gets well alight," he said, "we shall have to advance a hundred yards or so into the open and throw up a shelter-trench, if necessary, among the beet. Run back, Desmond, and order all reserves, not absorbed, into the firing-line."

Walter turned his back on the sunlight and plunged into the darkness of the wood. He ran as quickly as he could, stumbling here over a fallen and smouldering bough, there over a dead soldier; and as he ran he shouted several times, but received no reply. In the darkness and the choking smoke he must have got confused and lost his bearings, for he could see nothing of the reserves, nor did he reach the southern limit of the wood; the only men he saw were a few stretcher-parties, busy rescuing wounded from the smouldering undergrowth. At last Walter asked one of these if he knew where the reserves were. "The reserves, sir?" was the answer. "There ain't none; leastways they all went up into the front long ago. But you're on the wrong track anyway, sir; that's the way to

the rear," and he pointed in a direction at right angles to that which Walter was following.

"Have we lost many, do you know?" asked Walter.

"That we 'ave, sir," answered the man; "the ambulances in rear are chock-full. They're a-sendin' of them into that there village now. But I must get out of this 'ere wood quick; the bloomin' place will be well alight in a minute."

The ambulance-party moved off, and Walter turned towards the front again. The smoke blinded and choked him; little tongues of flame licked at him as he dodged through the smouldering trees, and hot cinders fell on him in a continuous shower from the crackling branches overhead. He hurried on, streaming with perspira-

tion, his clothing torn and blackened his eyes smarting. Suddenly vociferous cheering burst out quite close to him; again and again it was repeated, and seemed to echo and swell on every side. He plunged forward more desperately than before, and in another instant found himself blinking in the sunlight on the edge of the wood not far from the place where he had left his General. In front of him, across the beet-fields, the British soldiers streamed in long, irregular lines, cheering as they ran, their bayonets sparkling in the sun. The trampled and blood-stained grass, among which lay a few still, grey-clad figures, marked where the defenders of the wood had lain. General Hippisley and Nugent were nowhere to be seen.

(To be continued.)